

CAN YOU
BELIEVE ME
STORIES
BY ALICIA ASPINWALL





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Their lips touched its crispy outer edge.

CAN YOU BELIEVE ME STORIES

By

Alicia Aspinwall

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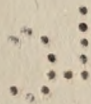
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TO

PHILIP CHANNING ASPINWALL

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THE IRREPRESSIBLE PIE

PHILIP was perched on a chair in the kitchen watching Katie make an apple-pie for dinner. Katie was called away for a moment, and no sooner had she left the kitchen, than what do you suppose Philip did? He climbed down and walked to a side-table, on which lay a package marked in very plain letters—"SELF-RAISING FLOUR."

A few days before, the grocer had left this package for the cook to try. It was a new kind of flour, and *wonderfully* powerful, so powerful, in fact, that only a tiny speck was to be used each time.

Now into this package Philip plunged his naughty little hand and took out a monstrous

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big handful, which he quickly threw into poor Katie's pastry! Then he took the roller and began rolling and rolling as hard as he could! He had no idea what it was that he had put into the pastry, for he could n't read, but he knew perfectly well that he had done something which he ought *not* to have done.

When innocent Katie came back, she rolled out her pastry (little thinking what it now contained) and, spreading the crust on a nice deep plate, dropped in the apples, tucked them cozily under the top-crust, and finally put the pie in the oven to bake. Philip, looking on, grew red in the face, for he began to feel very badly for what he had done. Pretty soon, Katie sent him out of the hot kitchen, and away he went with a heavy heart. But this by no means ends the tale, which is not about a boy at all, but is in reality a "pie-story."

After the Pie was baked, Katie put it into

the pantry to cool and left the kitchen. Scarcely had she gone, when a most startling and unusual thing occurred:

Something was the matter with the Pie!

It was beginning to act in a most un-pie-like way, and you will scarcely credit me when I tell you about it. After being left in the pantry, it lay quietly for a moment, on its roomy, comfortable plate on the shelf, and then—suddenly, it gave a queer little shiver, and began slowly, s-l-o-w-l-y to *rise!*

You see Philip had stirred into it that new and wonderfully strong self-raising flour, and had used about *twenty* times as much as was necessary, and now it was beginning to work, was beginning to rise!

Up, up, up, went the Pie.

“Wal, I do declare!” said the Apples, “we’re goin’ up some, ain’t we?” (These were real country-apples from New Hampshire.)

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"We are indeed," agreed the Butter, "but that's no new thing for me. I'm always 'going up.'"

"Well, we don't look up *to* you," remarked the Nutmeg, spicily.

"Friends, how sweet the air is, up here," interrupted the kindly Sugar. As for the Self-Raising Flour, he said nothing, being out of breath, from his efforts. He had never been asked to do anything quite like this before, but he knew he was a "self-raiser" and he did not shirk his duty.

Up and up they rose, until finally they reached the pantry-ceiling, and bumped crisply against it.

"Oh!" said the Ceiling, "you are burning me, Pie! Get down."

"I can't" said he, "for I've swallowed some powerful raising-flour. It isn't my fault, so keep cool!"

"Gee, I like that!" said the Ceiling angrily.

"It's you who ought to keep cool. How can *I* do it, with red-hot Pie bumping me?"

"You speak reasonably," said the Pie (who was a just Pie). "But tell me, what can I do about it?"

"Say, that's the talk, ain't it?" said the Apples, "what can we do 'bout it?"

"I'm perfectly willing to do what's right," said the Self-Raising Flour apologetically. "I know, fellers, that I don't belong here, but being here, I must *raise*." So up they soared, while the poor Ceiling moaned, in a heart-rending manner.

A new Tin Pan, by all odds the brightest creature in the pantry, remarked here dryly:

"If you had any sense whatever, you would leave; go out of the window (which is wide-open) and then soar to your heart's content."

"Yes, do," snapped a Skewer, "and the

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farther off you soar, the better," he added—pointedly.

"The Pie itself was pleased at the Pan's suggestion, and so was the Flour, who stopped raising for a moment, to consider.

"Yes, I think we 'll go," he whispered, so the Pie dropped down a bit, and teetered sideways toward the window.

"Here, here," shouted a piece of Cheese, "I must go too!"

"Why?" inquired the Pie.

"Because cheese *always* goes with apple-pie."

"Not with this one," came the answer.

"Please take me, I'll help—I'm very strong," pleaded the Cheese. To this the Pie made no answer, but floated away, followed by a chorus of glad "good-byes" from the Pantry-people.

"Oh, what a relief!" cried the Pie.

"'Tis so, it's el'gunt, ain't it, particularly

when you're as het up as we be?" remarked the Country-apples.

"I was simply *melting*, in there," said the



The Pie floated away, followed by a chorus of good-byes from the Pantry-people.

Butter crossly, while the Sugar and Nutmeg said nothing—as they were both fast asleep.

"Here at last I have a chance to show

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my wonderful powers," said the Self-Raising Flour enthusiastically, and he immediately shot upward, three quarters of a mile!

Having soared so high, at the poor dizzy Pie's suggestion, he kindly came down again nearer the earth, where he floated lazily, about five feet from the ground. Here some boys caught sight of him, and although they had none of them ever seen pie served up in the air, still—pie was pie, under all conditions, and they made a rush for it! But—the Self-Raising Flour got in his work at once, and up shot the Pie house-high, while the disappointed boys gazed after it with watering mouths.

"Say! Let's tease 'em some. Come on, let's," suggested the Country-apples, giggling.

"The Pie laughed juicily and consented, and the fun began. Slowly it dropped to-

ward the earth, while the four boys danced with excitement.

“She’s coming, she’s coming!” they shouted. Bit by bit, it lowered itself; then, when within a couple of inches of being caught, up it shot again! This was repeated over and over, until the Pie was exhausted from laughing, and the poor little boys weak from excitement. At last, moving up and down in graceful salutation, the polite Pie sailed once more upward, and this time did not return. Flying low, it stole noiselessly through a quiet side-street, and, leaving the scolding boys behind, disappeared from sight. Then out into the busy main street of the town it hurried, arousing everywhere the greatest astonishment and fear.

“What *is* it?” inquired every one at first.

“Why—it looks like a—of course it *can’t* be, but—yes it is too, it’s a Pie! That’s

just what it is, an *apple-pie*, floating all by itself up in the air!"

"Where all pastry ought to be," snapped a cross old doctor.

"But see here, friends, I can't have this sort of thing happening in our peaceful town," said the mayor sternly. "It has no permit, in the first place, and I cannot allow unlicensed pies to stalk through the air. *Arrest it*, at once!"

"It must be contrary to law," said one.

"Of course it is, it's a disturber of the peace," added another.

All sorts of schemes were now suggested, to induce the Pie to come down and be caught, but the case was a difficult and unusual one, and none proved successful, for there it remained, floating lazily back and forth, about thirty feet from the ground. Sometimes it would soar very high, and a groan would arise from the now dense

crowd. Then it would suddenly swoop down with a delirious rush towards the hands eagerly outstretched to welcome it—but always stopping *just* out of reach!

Oh, little boys and girls, leading your happy sheltered lives, be thankful, the next time you have apple-pie for dinner, that it was not made as this one was!

What with shouting, laughing, and confusion, all through the town, the morning wore on, and finally the Pie became tired, and sailed away out of the village, over the fields and waving tree-tops, past herds of placid grazing cows, who looked up at it, without the slightest interest or curiosity. Provided the grass was good, they did n't care *how* many pies flew by!

At noon, the Pie rested for an hour, on a clean stone, by the side of a pretty lake, which spent the entire day whispering to the credulous listening trees on its shores.

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Refreshed by its much-needed rest, it next sailed back to its native town. Now I am going to tell you a secret—something that is not generally known: At heart, it is the strong wish of every decent pie to be *eaten*, and this particular one was no exception. So before long, the Country-apples said:

“Say, fellers, I’m tired. Let’s allow the next children we meet to eat us? I jest love children. They’re awful cute, ain’t they?”

“I agree with you, Apples,” answered the Pie, “it’s high time for us to be eaten. I should prefer, too, to have children do it, for I myself love little people. You know the old saying:

“What makes the Pie love Children so?”

The eager people say.

“Because the Children love the Pie,
And eat it night and day.”

The Self-Raising Flour, feeling that he had

proved now, to every one's satisfaction, that he was without a rival in the "raising business" agreed with the others, and tried to wake up the Butter, Nutmeg, and Sugar, but they were hopelessly asleep.

"Let us," said the Pie, "rest here on this roof, until we see some attractive-looking children!" (For even if one is only a pie, you know, it does make a big difference *who* eats one.)

So there on the roof they sat, while several uninteresting grown people passed through the street.

Then came the pleasant sound of children's voices, and the Pie floated down. Could anything have been better arranged?

For there, in the middle of the quiet road, were three dear little girls—Katherine Townsend, Mary-Gordon, and Anne Williams—who, with hands clasped, were dancing round and round in a circle!

Into this small group stole the Pie, and remained suspended, just mouth-high! The three children caught sight of the strange object at the same moment.

"Ah! Oh! Ugh!" said they, and nothing more, but they began narrowing the circle, approaching nearer and nearer each other—and the Pie. They knew what it was, of course, and that it was an unusual thing to meet an apple-pie floating along like that—at exactly the right eating-height, too! But there it was, and there they were, and—finally, their lips had touched its crispy outer edge, and three little mouths opened wide, while ninety-six small white teeth crunched bravely toward the middle! There was no one in sight, silence was about them, and so eat-ing, eat-ing, eat-ing steadily, the three small heads gradually approached each other. Finally, as the children were careful and ate evenly, the exact middle of

the Pie was reached, the little girls' lips touched, and there remained nothing more, for Katherine, Mary-Gordon, and Anne had eaten every crumb, every single scrap, of the most astounding Pie that had ever been made!!

Now, when this thing happened, the three little girls were on their way to a party, dressed in their best—Katherine in blue, Mary-Gordon in pink, and Anne all in white. After finishing the Pie, the three children said, "*Ah! Oh! Ugh!*" again, and then went on to the party, soon reaching the house where it was to be given. They all went up at once to say "How do you do?" to the lady, and Katherine held out her hand politely, and Mary-Gordon held out her hand politely, and Anne *began* to hold out her—when what, oh *what* do you think happened? One hates to speak of it, but those three poor little, dear little girls began

slowly, s-l-o-w-l-y to *rise on their toes!* They made every effort to keep themselves down on the floor, but they simply could n't do it!

For you see, the irrepressibly strong Self-raising Flour (who was, at bottom, awfully vain) had not been able to resist showing people what he could do!

So the three unfortunate little girls began to float upward, their frightened cries filling the room. Up, up they went, now as high as the table, as a tall lamp near, now above it, and up still farther until at last their heads bumped gently against the ceiling itself. By this time, the whole house was in an uproar, all the children crying, the mammas and papas running back and forth, telephoning for doctors, and holding down their own children; for, not knowing what the matter was, every one feared that the trouble might be contagious, and

that *his* child might be the next one to be afflicted.

The parents of the unfortunate girls themselves were summoned, and were soon on the scene. A tall step-ladder was procured, and the sobbing children taken down and tenderly placed on the floor, but no sooner were they there when, alas! they again r-o-s-e slowly until they reached the ceiling!

Finding that nothing further happened, however, and having now gotten over their first fright, they stopped crying at last, and asked if they might have some ice-cream and cake? This their parents gladly gave, mounting the step-ladder to reach them. While they were eating, the parents and the doctors were anxiously consulting—trying to think of some way of bringing their three children to the ground again, and keeping them there, *permanently*.

Just then, the Youngest Boy at the party came into the room.

"Oh," said he, "I used to have a whole family of make-belive people on the ceiling, when I was littler."

"Then, Philip," called Katherine, "if you had even *that* kind of a family up here, you ought to know a great deal about ceilings."

"I do" said he.

"Won't you help us then?" cried the three children, from above.

"I know of one thing you might do," said Philip, "and I think it would work. It is a simple easy thing to try, anyway."

"Oh, speak then, tell us what to do?" cried all the mammas and papas together.

"Well," said he, "I think the girls will come down, if you wrap three *down-comforters* about them."

"Now, that is a mighty good idea," cried the doctors, enthusiastically.

"But if they do come down," inquired one anxious mother, "the question is, will they *stay* down? It would be a terrible thing, if they had to go through life wrapped in down-comforters!"

"I don't think they will have to do that" said Philip.

"Let us try—let us try his remedy, at once!" cried all the mammas and papas; so the comforters were procured and, from the ladder's top, wrapped carefully about the children, who were still bump bumping against the ceiling.

And the result was wonderful—magical, in fact, for almost immediately, the three little girls began to float slowly down, until they stood once more firmly upon the floor, where they removed the comforters and remained without rising again, while their weeping parents kissed them tenderly.

Now there were three reasons why this wonderful thing had happened. In the first place, in lifting these heavy children, the Self-raising Flour had used up all his remaining strength. Secondly, he had recognized in Philip the same little boy who had thrown him into the Pie in the morning, and he thought the child had suffered enough. But the third—and the most powerful—reason was *this*: that when a down-comforter is wrapped about any one who is up on the ceiling, that person has got to pay some attention to it. For after all, say what you will, a down-comforter (provided it is a genuine one, is always a *down-comforter*!

THE FURNACE WHO MADE A MISTAKE

ONCE upon a time, there was a Walker & Pratt Furnace, who lived in the cellar of a house in Brookline. He understood his business, sent out his heat generously, and with the help of many hard-working, energetic pipes, which turned and cork-screwed their way all over the house, he kept the place as warm as two pieces of toast. He led a happy secluded life, until one day he unfortunately happened to overhear something.

On this particular day, Richard, the man, came to attend to the Furnace as usual, and with him was his little son. Now Dick was a boy who asked questions *all* the time,

stopping only long enough to think up new ones. He scarcely ever opened his mouth that a question didn't get itself asked! Sometimes his poor father and mother grew so tired answering him, that they had to sit down and rest!

This morning, just as soon as his father had opened the cellar-door, the little boy began :

"Is this the cellar, Pa? Why is it the cellar? What makes it so big? What is the name of the man that built it, Pa? My, it's awful dark, isn't it? Where does the dark go to, in the daytime? Where's the furnace? What's *that*, Pa?

As he asked this last question, he stopped, quite out of breath, and pointed to a saw-horse, which stood near the Furnace.

"That? Well, that, my son, is a *horse*," said the father patiently, little dreaming what terrible mischief this one answer was

going to cause. After filling the water-tank, and shaking and feeding the Furnace with fresh coal, the man went off, holding the hand of little Dick, who was asking two questions at every step.

The Furnace was left alone, but he was no longer the same, for in those few moments, while the man had been talking with his boy, a mighty change had come over him. This is what had happened:

When little Dick had pointed at the wooden saw-horse, and had said "What's *that?*" the Furnace, not being able to see very well in the dark cellar, and knowing that he was the most important thing there, thought, of course, that the boy was speaking of *him*, and expected the father to answer, "My son, that is a furnace"; and when instead he heard him say, "That is a *horse*," he was at first so surprised, that he almost fell down!

“I was n’t mistaken,” he said to himself, “I heard him say plainly and unmistakably, ‘That is a *horse*.’ Sparks and cinders, think of it!” he cried, “up to now, I have always considered myself a Furnace!” He trembled with excitement. “Of course, that man ought to know what he’s talking about, so if he says I’m a horse, why, then—then—of course, I must *be* a horse!”

All through that long day he thought about it, until he became so nervous that he almost put his fire out. (No fire burns well in a nervous furnace.)

When night came, he was unable to sleep. “What a mistake I have made—to think that all this time I should have believed myself to be a Furnace, when I was really and truly a horse!” he muttered. “Here I have stood patiently for years, heating this house, when I ought to have been prancing about, and leading the happy

free life of a horse!" He was vexed (as I daresay most of us would have been).

Finally, having worked himself into a terrible state of excitement, he rebelled utterly at doing furnace-work any more, and made up his mind to go away. He decided that he would go to some stable that very night, and live there with the horses, where he belonged.

It was cold, and when Richard, the furnace-man, came in the afternoon, he made a fine hot fire.

The early night-hours passed, and at about twelve, after the house had grown perfectly quiet, the Furnace gathered himself together and bade a tender farewell to each pipe. He was sad at the thought of parting, for he was strongly attached to them all. But finally he was ready, and with some difficulty tore himself away from the brick base, where he had lived

happily for so many years. He then rolled ponderously toward the cellar door, and found it locked! "Unlock!" he commanded loudly, and the Key was so terribly frightened at being spoken to by a Furnace, that she rolled completely over!

"Open!" said the Furnace next, and the big Door sprang open at once. When the bitter cold struck him, the Furnace shrank together, and became so small that he was able to squeeze himself through the opening, without difficulty. Then down the steps into the yard he blundered noisily, and started on his journey: roll, waddle, bump, *bang!* Waddle, clash, *clang!* He could not walk quietly, being so hollow and metallic; still, considering that this was his first attempt, he did marvelously well.

As he proceeded, he found that practice was making him perfect, for he walked

with more ease and grace. (He was a "Walker-Pratt Furnace," and of course the "Walker" part was a great help.)

"I wonder," he said at last, "where those stables are?"

At that moment, he caught sight of a big black Cat, who was sitting on a fence, asleep. He knew cats well, having cherished several of them. In fact, one cat and he had brought up a charming family of kittens, in the cellar. So he approached this one and spoke to her.

"Hulloa, Cat," he cried, "will you kindly tell me where I can find a good stable?"

At this, the Cat gave a great jump, and was about to run, when she happened to look up, and saw who it was who had spoken to her. She was then so amazed that she was quite unable to move.

"What d-d-did you say?" she stammered.

The Furnace repeated his question.

“Go straight down this hill, and take the first turn to the right,” said she nervously.



“Hullo, Cat,” he cried . . .

“It’s the second building on the left—a big white one. But, pardon me, would you mind telling me who you are, and where you came from? I have seen many

strange things in my life, but I certainly never met a walking-furnace before!"

"I 'm not a Furnace," was the indignant answer.

"I beg your pardon," said the Cat politely, "what are you, then?"

"Can't you see? I'm a Horse," said the Furnace, solemnly.

At this, the Cat was greatly amused, but she gave no sign. (Cats never share their jokes with anybody.)

"Ah, you 're a Horse, are you?" she said, after a moment's hesitation. "Well—perhaps you are, although to be sure you certainly do not *look* like one."

"Don't I?" asked the Furnace, somewhat crestfallen, "I wonder why? I know I am a Horse, and supposed of course that I looked like one. But, to tell you the honest truth, Cat, I don't know how they ought to look, for I never saw a horse in my life!"

The Cat was intensely interested, and seeing this, the Furnace confided his story to her.

“Now,” said she, after it was over, “my advice to you is to go home again. I have some cousins, who are stable-cats, and so I happen to know a great deal about Horses, and the lives they lead. I strongly urge you, sir, not to go to them. Come now—go home.”

“I won’t!” snapped the Furnace. “I’m a Horse, and I’m going to live in a stable.”

“Very well, do so,” said this very wise Cat, who knew how useless it was to argue with a furnace. “Go your way,” she continued, “but if you will allow me, as a friend, to add a word of advice, I should suggest your first getting rid of those coals. No horse ever carries red-hot coals inside himself.”

“Does n’t he?” asked the Furnace, anx-

iously; "if that is so, I'd better spit 'em right out." This he proceeded to do, opening wide his door-jaws, and scattering the hot coals in the snow, which sizzled with rage, and "S-s-pit, s-s-pit" back at him!

Then bidding his friend the Cat a grateful good-bye, the Furnace hurried down the hill toward the stable, his open door clank-ity-ankiting noisily, from side to side, at each step. As soon as he had turned the corner, the Cat smiled, stretched herself luxuriously, and, jumping to the sidewalk, lay down near (but not too near) the warm coals, where she was soon fast asleep.

The Furnace, feeling lighter and freer, went clattering along the side-street until he saw the big white building of which the Cat had spoken. Walking up to the entrance he found the wide door closed, and said loudly, "Open!" and this one, like the other,

obeyed immediately (no Door can resist a Furnace, when it speaks with decision).

Waddling into the stable, the big fellow stood silently for a moment, looking about. The door meanwhile had closed itself neatly behind him.

“B-r-rr!” remarked the Furnace, at last, clearing its iron throat, with a loud rasping noise. “Are the—are the Horses at home, may I ask?”

They were at home, twenty of them—and they all waked up immediately, when they heard the strange metallic voice.

“Who are you?” they asked.

“I am a Horse,” came the proud answer, “and I’ve come to this stable to live with you. How d’ye do?”

At this, all the animals turned round and looked at him, standing alone under the one lamp.

“Well!” they shouted in surprise, “well,

well, if it isn't a *Furnace*, a real one. Just look at it!"

"I *was* a Furnace, gentlemen, but I'm not one now," was the indignant answer. "No indeed, I am a *Horse*, although it was only yesterday that I found it out."

At this everybody laughed, while the Furnace trembled with rage. Finally, at their questioning, he told the whole story, after which they all advised him to go straight back to his cellar.

"You say you had plenty of coals to eat, up there?" asked one.

"Yes," he admitted.

"Water to drink, too?"

"Yes, they filled my water-tank faithfully."

"And you worked only in winter?"

"Well, you see, through the warm weather they gave me a vacation," said he.

"Would that we had all been born Furnaces," said the Horses, bitterly. This sur-

prised the Furnace somewhat, but, although they proceeded to tell him of the hard lives they led, and tried to induce him to return, it was in vain, for, as I said, he was a true Furnace, and incurably obstinate.

Finally one wise old Horse said gently :

“Very well, stay here if you will, though of course, if you do, your family up there will have to put in another Furnace in your place, and right away too, as it is so cold.”

“*What ?*” roared the Furnace, suddenly enraged. “Put another one in my place? They’d never dare to! I won’t have it! I won’t permit it! I’ll—I’ll go home first!

“Neigh, neigh,” said the old Horse gently, “if you are what you say you are, why do you care what they do, up there?”

At this, the twenty Horses gave a regular horse-laugh, while the Furnace shook his iron sides angrily, till the stable echoed with the tumult.

The man who slept in the room above, hearing the commotion, hurried down, whip in hand, to see what the trouble was, and there, in the dim light, he caught sight of the Furnace !

“Get out of here !” he shouted, and, half asleep as he was, never stopped to think of the strangeness of finding a Furnace standing there right in the middle of the floor !

He ran to the door, which he threw wide open. “Get out !” he repeated.

But the Furnace stood his ground.

Then the man lifted his whip, threateningly.

“Fly, Fly !” warned the twenty Horses.

“Get out, or I’ll beat you !” roared the man, who was really a very unpleasant person.

“Beat me ? You can’t do it,” said the Furnace, triumphantly. “The Walker-Pratt Furnace *can’t* be beaten. Master says so.”

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The man paid no attention to this, however, for whack! came the whip on the poor Furnace's side, making a deep dent. Then whack! down it came again!

Of course, with his iron skin, the Furnace felt nothing, and was n't really injured, but his feelings were terribly hurt, and, being sensitive at heart, he at once made up his mind to leave this place—where he had not received a cordial welcome, and where he was evidently not appreciated!

So out he rolled noisily, the door shutting quickly behind him. The man, still more than half asleep, stumbled to his bed again, and when he woke up the next day, and tried to think what strange thing it was that had happened in the early morning-hours, he could not remember, and thought it must have been a dream—and so he never spoke of it, to anybody.

Meanwhile, the poor disappointed Fur-

nace clack-ancked and clatter-attered his way up the hill, as quickly as he could, for he was more troubled than he was willing to own, at the thought of his family's finding that he was gone, and getting a strange Furnace to take his place.

It was just beginning to be light, but, as it was a dull gray day, he fortunately met no one—even the friendly Cat had gone. Reaching the place where he had dropped his coal, he picked it up again as well as he could, and waddled his way along to his own door, which promptly opened for him.

Once inside, he received a royal welcome—a welcome which warmed the poor fellow's heart.

With some difficulty, he pulled himself up onto his base, attached himself to the pipes as well as he could, and then awaited anxiously the coming of the man. He

arrived at six o'clock, and when he looked at the Furnace, its fire out, broken away from its pipes, covered with mud and dirt, and deeply dented on one side, he almost *fainted*!

The master of the house came down, and the two talked it over, examining the Furnace, and trying to explain matters, but in vain. For the Cat, the twenty Horses, and the Furnace himself were the only ones who *could* have explained, and they—never said a word!

THE CANARY-DOG

THERE was once a beautiful little canary, who lived in a golden cage in a sunny window. Pleasant green plants grew and blossomed about him. He was very happy, for he had a kind mistress who gave him plenty of seeds, nice fresh water, a crisp piece of cuttle-fish, and a bath every two days.

He sang and sang, for he was glad to be in such a beautiful world. Besides his big mistress, he had two little twin-girl ones, Rose and Elizabeth, who looked so exactly alike that they sometimes could not tell each other apart! They were both kind to the bird, bringing him bits of celery, lettuce, and chick-weed, and never frightening him.

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One spring, a family moved into the big empty house opposite, and they brought with them three dogs. A big one, named "Jack," a middling-sized one, "Laddie," and a wee brown one, whose name was "Snuff." All three lived happily together, in a fine big dog-house facing the street, and they were very interesting, for they played and romped together the whole long day.

Jack was a sensible old fellow, who said but little; Laddie, more talkative, asked many questions of Jack, who occasionally answered. As for Snuff, the Yorkshire terrier, he was never still for one single instant. He was either racing about the place, chasing cats and birds, or asking in a funny little shrill voice, the most absurd questions, which he was obliged to answer himself, as no one else would.

Now from the time these three beautiful dogs arrived, little Vitzt (the yellow canary,

in the opposite house) was so delighted that he could n't bear to take his eyes from them. He forgot to sing; he almost forgot to eat his seeds, and would sit for hours on his top perch, his round beady eyes staring eagerly at the fascinating dog-family.

He thought constantly of them, and when night came, and the darkness hid everything, he would try to imagine what they were doing. Then he began to wish that he too, were a dog, and to long to be one. Finally, he thought of nothing else but this, all through the day, while at night he would dream of it! Now, to keep one's mind fixed steadily on any one thing is dangerous, for it sometimes happens that something happens, and—in this case, it happened that something *did* happen!

For one fine morning, at daybreak, this little bird opened his eyes, looked down at himself and found—*what do you think*

he found? That some time during the dark night, while he had been thinking and dreaming that he was a dog, he had actually —*become one!* Yes, turned himself into a funny, wee dog! He was fuzzy, fluffy, and very yellow, and just the size of a canary, but he was, nevertheless, a really, truly dog, with four legs, a new tail, and two nice fresh ears! Of course, he was greatly surprised at what had occurred, and at first, terribly frightened too, but watching carefully, and finding that nothing further happened, he began to feel very proud of himself.

Soon his mistress came to the cage as usual, and when she saw him she started back with a cry of astonishment.

“Why, what ’s this? Where is Vitzt?” she cried. “Where did this strange little creature come from? I do not understand it, at all!”

And indeed she did n't, for no one could, you see (and nobody ever did!).

Rose and Elizabeth were wild with delight, when they saw the wee yellow dog which had come so mysteriously through the night, and which now stood wobbling about uncertainly on the bottom of the cage.

"You darling fluff-ball," cried Elizabeth.

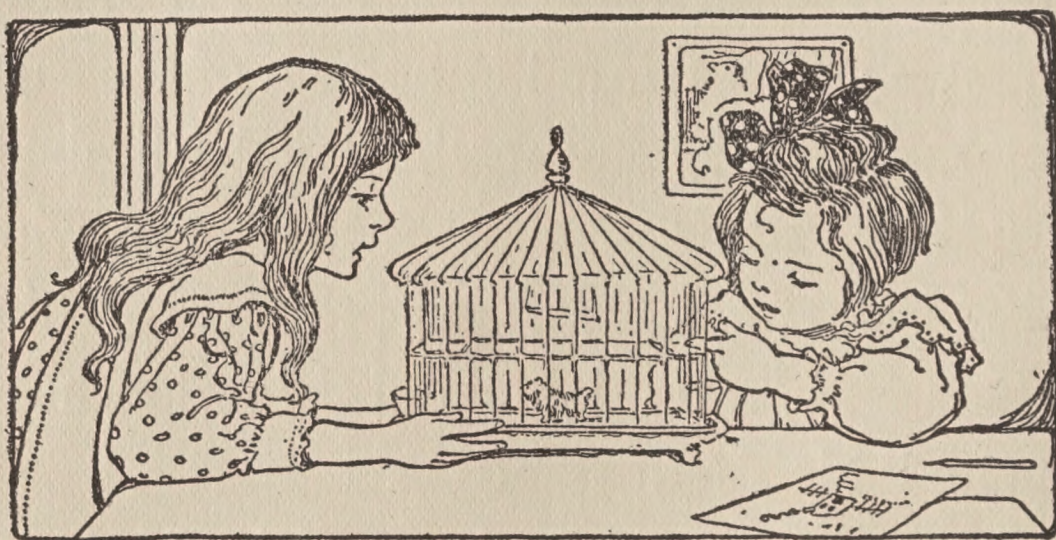
"You yellow pet," echoed Rose, while Vitzt became prouder and prouder of himself. Finally, he lifted his dog-head, opened his mouth and —

"The cunning thing! Look! He's going to bark," cried Rose, but instead of that, from the little quivering throat, there came the old familiar canary-song!

After the first few notes, mamma and the children began to laugh, and they laughed till they cried, for it certainly was a ridiculous and unusual thing, to hear a canary-song come trilling and bubbling from a

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wee dog's mouth. But Vitzt didn't like to be laughed at, so he stopped singing, gave two indignant little barks, and hopped sullenly to a perch. On this he tried to stand, swaying dizzily from side to side,



"Look! He's going to bark," cried Rose.

then—finding that he could not keep his footing,—down he flopped to the bottom of the cage again, where he lay in a surprised little heap, looking up longingly at the pleasant perches above. Mamma, meanwhile, had been filling the seed- and water-dishes.

Vitz took a mouthful of the seeds, which somehow did n't seem to have that nice, usual taste, to-day.

Finally, a dish of warm milk was placed before him, and he lapped it up eagerly, with his fresh little tongue, and liked it. That is, the dog-half of him did, while the bird-half continued to nibble an occasional seed! That day he remained in the cage, for mamma (who made a shrewd guess at the true state of the case) thought he had better get used to being a dog, in his old home, before he began to lead a dog's life, outside.

The two little girls, although they obeyed their mother and did n't touch him, were so fascinated by the queer yellow Canary-dog that they stayed in the room all day watching him, being much amused when he tried, as he did again and again, to stand on his perch.

When he sang his song, with the funny gruff little "Bow-wow" at the end, they laughed heartily, too.

Vitzt's feelings were hurt at this, however, and he finally made up his mind that he would bear it no longer, that he would escape from the house at the first opportunity, run across the street and stay with the Opposite Dogs.

"Live, as a dog should live," he said proudly, and chirped gaily at the pleasant thought. Then suddenly a part of his back, began to move slowly from side to side!

At this new sensation, he crouched, terribly frightened.

Soon, gaining courage, however, he peered round cautiously, and found that it was his own tail, which had been trying to wag itself!

"Upon my word," said he, "it is certainly

delightful to have a tail of one's own, and one that moves so easily, too. I remember now, that I have often seen the Opposite Dogs wag their tails from side to side, when they were happy."

He tried several times, and was greatly pleased to find that the tail wagged with ease and freedom, whenever he wished it to do so. He watched the Opposite Dogs now, with redoubled interest, all through the long afternoon, feeling delighted at the thought that he would soon be with them.

The hours seemed to hurry along quickly, during his first dog-day in the world, the night soon came—and with it a difficulty. For the Canary-dog wanted to go to bed, to go to sleep—and the poor little fellow *didn't know how!* All through his canary-life, you see, when sleep-time came, he had simply hopped onto a perch, curled up one leg, stood firmly on the other, and

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tucked his dear little head under his dear little wing, as tidily as possible (which was certainly an easy and comfortable way for anybody to go to bed.)

“Now, what am I to do?” he thought, sadly. “I don’t see how I can sleep at all to-night, for, although I still have a head, I have n’t any wings, nor even a few feathers under which to hide it. Then, O dear!” he continued, looking down at himself in dismay, “what am I to do with all those extra legs? I can’t get rid of them, and I can’t possibly tuck up so many!”

It was indeed a problem. He tried to stand on one leg and hold up the other three, but found it an impossibility, for down he would fall, each time.

Finally an idea came and, backing up to the high seed-dish, he rested his two hind legs firmly on that, and, propped in this ridiculous position, soon fell asleep. There

Mamma and the children found him, in the morning, and their shouts of laughter wakened him. He did look very funny, of course, but if they had known how it hurt his pride, they never would have laughed at him. At last, he made up his mind to run away, that very day.

After his canary-dog breakfast of seeds and milk, he was taken out and put onto the floor, for exercise. Soon, with the mother's permission, the children carried him down to the sunny piazza in a soft little basket. He bounded and hopped about there, in a ridiculous way, for, try as he would, he found it quite impossible to either walk or trot!

When the children went to their dinner, he pretended to be very sleepy, crawled into his basket and shut his eyes, as if he were going to take a nap.

But after they had gone, the little scamp

hopped nimbly out, and went down the piazza steps, bump, bump, bump, onto the lawn—over which he quickly hurried! The house-cat, hidden behind a bush, saw him rolling down the steps, and, thinking he was a yellow ball, rushed out to play. Looking more closely, she discovered that the ball was n't a ball at all—that it was very much alive.

She then decided that it must be a new kind of yellow rat, which it was her duty to catch at once, so she stole stealthily after it. Reaching the front of the house, she saw the strange little creature just before her. But to her astonishment, instead of running, it was leaping across the lawn, in a most un-rat-like manner, and still worse, *chirping* cheerfully to itself, as it went! This was too much for the cat. She became awfully frightened, and decided that whatever kind of a creature it was, she wanted

nothing whatever to do with it, and so, folding her tail neatly between her legs, old Puss ran up a tree!

Meanwhile, the Canary-dog, knowing nothing of all this, had crossed the road and reached the kennel. It looked very big, as he was so very small himself, but he bravely peeped through the opening, and there he saw wise old Jack, snoozing comfortably. So black, so shaggy, so huge did he seem, however, that the poor yellow mite decided at once not to rouse him. Just then, Jack stretched himself, opened his eyes, and gave a yelp of astonishment.

"Cats and dogs!" he shouted. "What do I see before me? Who are you?"

"I am a little dog," faltered poor Vitzt.

"A dog? You—a dog?" laughed Jack.

"Well, perhaps you are, little feller, though you don't look much like one, and that's a fact. In the first place, I never saw a dog

your color, and then—you certainly don't act like one," for at the discouraging words the little creature had begun to hop quickly away. "Here, come back," cried Jack, and Vitzt approached meekly.

"Now, tell me about yourself," commanded the big dog. "Where did you come from, anyway?"

The frightened Canary-dog, gaining confidence in studying Jack's kind old face, told the story—of his having been a singing canary, and of how, after having seen the charming dog-family, he had longed ardently to be one, himself.

"A natural and proper wish," interrupted Jack, at this point.

Then Vitzt told how, by thinking, and imagining that he was a dog, he had waked up the day before to find that during the night he had, in some mysterious way, become one.

"Never in all my life did I hear such a strange story" was Jack's comment, when the tale was over. "And now, what are you going to do? What are your plans?"

"I came here, sir, to have you tell me what to do. I can no longer remain in a mere bird-cage, of course. I would like to—to live here with you, if you are willing to have me? You will know best; you seem to be a very wise dog."

"I am," replied Jack, earnestly.

"You look as if you knew everything, sir," added Vitzt.

"I do," admitted Jack, who began to like this funny little creature, "that is, everything that is worth knowing, I know," he added. "You did right to come to me, Little One. You want to be a first-rate dog, I suppose?"

"Yes, please," said Vitzt.

"You shall, for I myself will teach you," announced Jack kindly.

At this, Vitzt was so pleased that he threw back his head and burst into song!

But this was too much for big Jack, who, at the first notes, jumped to his feet, and stared at the wee dog, in utter amazement!

"Gracious, stop that!" he cried, loudly. Poor Vitzt obeyed. "Dogs never sing. Come here, Little One!"

The Canary-dog approached.

"Don't *hop* like that," continued Jack, irritably, "It 's a perfectly ridiculous thing for a dog to do!"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Jack," said Vitzt, sadly, "but I hop because—I don't know how to trot, yet."

"There, there!" said Jack kindly, "that will all come right in time. After all, you have n't been a dog very long, and indeed

—you are not a very long dog, now!” At this joke, Jack laughed loudly.

“Now listen,” he continued, after a minute. “You must watch me and the others. Do exactly as we do, and all will be well. Ah, here are the dogs now. Run into our house, while I tell them about you; otherwise, they might think you were a yellow rat, and eat you up, you know.”

At this unpleasant suggestion, little Vitzt hopped quickly to the friendly dog-house, where he nestled into the soft straw, while Jack explained matters fully to Laddie and Snuff. They were very kind, and promised to give all possible help.

Snuff went out and dug up a rich old beef-bone, which he placed hospitably before the little stranger. He, poor mite, didn't even know what it was, and turning up his nose said, “Too bad that thing smells so badly!” (A remark which made them all laugh!)

The three kind dogs gave up their engagements, and devoted themselves to the Canary-dog that entire afternoon.

But, alas! do what they would, they were unable to make any progress; for, you see, poor Vitzt was really still half-canary, and that part refused firmly to do what the dog part wanted to!

Finally, Vitzt's sharp eyes caught sight of a big cat coming toward them, and he fled in terror, hiding behind Jack. He did n't know why he was afraid, he had never met a cat before, but at sight of her, his wee heart almost stopped beating!

Laddie and Snuff, however, spied her at the same moment, and gave chase at once; although Jack called to them lazily to "come back!"

"Never chase a cat, Vitzt," he said.

"I do not want to," replied the Canary-dog.

“You very seldom get a cat, you know,” continued Jack, “and sometimes if you do get it—you get it,” here the old fellow chuckled.

“I see,” said Vitzt.

“The day is now almost over, and what do you say, Vitzt?” inquired the old dog, somewhat anxiously; “will you return to your cage-house opposite, or stay with us?”

“I’ll stay here, sir,” but as Vitzt said this, his tone was not nearly as hearty as before. To tell the truth, he was discouraged at the experiences of the afternoon, and he was also beginning to feel very homesick. He was hungry, too, and wanted some seeds. Worse than all, it was now growing dark, and he thought with horror of the many silent cats prowling about, of his own poor little self, so yellow, round, and plump, and so very-canary, inside!

“Well, Little One, if you really wish to stay, you may do so,” remarked wise old Jack at last, “although for many reasons, I strongly advise you to go home. If you stay, however, understand that it is under certain conditions.

“First, you must learn to walk and trot, as other dogs do, and not hop in that absurd way.”

“Not hop? Oh!” cried Vitzt, doubtfully.

“Secondly, you must learn to eat bones and to like the old ones best.”

“The very-smelling ones? *Ugh!*”

“Thirdly, you must learn the art of chasing cats, for since I spoke, I have been thinking that it is really a necessary thing for you to know. Even if you do not care to do it often, it will teach you to be fearless.”

“But I am afraid,” objected the Canary-

dog, "that while I was learning the art of chasing her, the cat might turn upon me, and eat me up!"

"Yes, there is danger of that," admitted Jack calmly, "but, in justice to the cat, let me hasten to say that, if she did do so, it would be because she did n't realize that you were a dog, but thought you were some other animal."

"But, I do not want to be eaten as—*anything!*" cried the Canary-dog excitedly.

"I don't blame you—I shouldn't think you would," agreed the old dog. "I have never been eaten myself, to be sure, not even as a puppy, but it certainly cannot be a pleasant sensation."

"No," answered poor Vitzt, with streaming eyes.

"Well, I have now told you the rules, Little One. Think matters over and decide for yourself. Knowing all the circumstan-

ces, however, I strongly advise you to return to your old home, and to live in your cage." (Jack, you see, was hoping in his kind old heart that the timid little Canary-dog would not stay with them, for he knew that if he did so, he would be in constant danger.)

"And, oh, by the way, Vitzt," he continued in a moment, "there is one other rule I did not speak of, and it is a very important one, too, so listen carefully. If you live in this kennel, you may bark and whine and howl occasionally, but you must *never sing!*" That is a very improper and undognified thing to do, and I can not allow it."

"Not sing?" screamed Vitzt. "But, dear Mr. Jack, I have sung all my life. I think I should die if I had to stop!"

"Very likely you would, my poor friend," said Jack sympathetically, and, bending his head, he gravely licked his other front paw.

“Then, oh, Mr. Jack, if I am not to hop, must eat bones (the very-smelling ones), must chase cats, and am never, never to sing, then—I think after all I had better go home, as you advise.”

As soon as these words had been spoken Vitzt began to feel happy, for, to tell the truth, he was now awfully homesick for his mistresses, and his old cage-home.

“But, dear Mr. Jack,” he added, “if I go back, I do not want to be as I am now, half-bird and half-dog. It is very confusing. Please tell me how to become as I was before, wholly a bird. Tell me—you are wise.”

“I am,” admitted Jack. “As I told you, I know all that there is to know, but your case, Little Friend, is not a common one. Let me think hard for a moment.”

So the dog put his head down and closed his eyes, while Vitzt waited in breathless anxiety.

"I have it!" cried the big fellow, soon.
"How did you become a dog?"

"By wishing to be one. By thinking, watching, and dreaming, of it," was Vitzt's answer.

"Very well," said Jack, triumphantly, "return to your home and wish to be a bird. Think, watch, and dream of *that*. Then see what will happen!"

"I will—I will!" cried little Vitzt, enthusiastically.

"Come then, hop onto my back and I'll go home with you now," announced Jack, and the Canary-dog, remembering the prowling cats, was glad indeed of this kind offer. So the two started, Vitzt's small claw-like paws clutching the big dog's shaggy hair. Three times on the way they met a bird, and each time Jack thoughtfully stopped, saying kindly, "Now, look hard; and long with all your heart!"

This Vitzt did faithfully. At the house door, the big and little friends waited patiently, but no one came.

“Sing,” commanded Jack, “they will hear that, and will come.”

Vitzt did so, joy at his heart—for he was very happy at being so near his old home. The song ended with a sweet high note, whereupon Jack cried jubilantly:

“Aha! Did you notice, Little One, that this time your song was *all* canary? There was no dog-bark at the end. I shouldn’t be surprised if you were already beginning to change back, a wee bit!”

Just then, approaching steps were heard.

“They are coming,” whispered Jack. “Good-bye. Good luck to you. I’ll watch the window to-morrow, and hope to see in the cage a really, truly, all-canary-bird.”

The children, Rose and Elizabeth, who had been crying at having lost their canary-

dog, gave him a most loving welcome, and he was immediately popped into his nice cage, where Mamma brought comforting fresh seeds and warm milk. He ate the seeds for supper, and the seeds only, for to-night, somehow, he didn't want the milk. Looking round the dear, familiar room, he began to wag his tail with pleasure, but, to his surprise, found that he could scarcely move it, for it creaked, and seemed stiff and unwieldy. Then he sang a sweet song, for he was happy indeed to be back in his cage, glad of the seeds and glad to be allowed to sing.

"I wish, oh, how I wish," he sang, "that I were a really bird, as I used to be."

He fell asleep with this wish, and all through the night he dreamed that he was a bird!

In the morning, when daylight came, he looked down at himself and found, to his

great joy, that a second miracle had been performed, for he had actually become once more a dear little *really-truly-canary-bird!*

And all that morning he looked out of the window and sang and sang, to a pleasant-faced shaggy black dog, who was sitting in front of the house, and who looked silently up at him, and wag-wagged his bushy tail!

IN THE PLATE COUNTRY



H, it was a beautiful plate —and such an unusually blue and white one, too! Uncle Sam had given it to Alfred on his fifth birthday, and since then each dinner had been eaten from it. Every day, after the beef, potato, and even the string-beans had disappeared into Alfred's red mouth, the small boy would sit for a long time, and gaze at the plate.

On its outer edge there was a perfectly superb procession of fierce blue lions, big-tusked elephants, camels, and other beasts, while on the inside, tall feathery trees and fat bushes grew luxuriantly.

Across the clear white sky were flying two monstrous blue birds. In the middle of the plate, a dark-blue bridge spanned a very-dashing river, and from it a path led windingly upward, to a mysterious navy-blue castle, which had more towers and turrets than any one could possibly think of. Alfred often wondered what was inside the blue castle, and also whether the dark speck that he could see by its entrance, and which looked like a boy, was really a boy or not?

One sad day, the pretty blue and white plate had fallen to the floor, and when they picked it up, they found, alas! an ugly crack extending entirely across it. Alfred cried, and Mamma telephoned to Uncle Sam, who, being a very kind Uncle Sam, had said he would get another plate just like it, from New York, where the rest of its family lived. Alfred promised to wait patiently.

He was a good boy, but of course he

had some faults, and he had one strange habit, about which I must tell you, and which, as you shall see, finally got him into trouble. Whenever his nurse gave him mashed potato, apple-sauce, or in fact any soft mushy thing, what do you suppose this little boy would do? *Bore a hole*, right into the middle of it, and make what he called a "well"!

Now, one day, Alfred was eating his dinner, and Susan had given him a particularly large helping of mashed potato, into which, as usual, he at once began to dig a hole—a deep and a very deep hole. Round and round bored his busy spoon. At his feet, watching with eager eyes, stood "Sport," a small and very blue Skye terrier. Deeper and deeper yet, through the soft potato, dug the boy, till at last he reached the plate itself. Across it was the ugly crack, plainly to be seen.

“There ’s the crack. Want to look at it, Sport?” he asked. Sport wagged his stumpy tail, and showed plainly how dreadfully much he longed to see it; so the boy took him up, and the two looked over the potato wall, down the deep hole. Then suddenly, without a moment’s warning, *something happened!* Alfred never could explain afterward just how it came about, but anyway, while bending over the hot potato, he grew dizzy, lost his balance, and, with Sport tightly clasped in his arms, fell with a loud cry of terror, head foremost, down into the big hole! He fell so awfully hard, that he *broke through the*



enamel, and, went deeply into the plate itself! You see, he had first fallen into the habit of digging the hole, and after that it was an easy matter to fall into the hole! He was naturally much frightened, and had given his poor head a hard thump too and cut it a bit, as he fell through.

“Well,” said he, picking himself up, “a pretty strange thing has happened to me now, I should think, and I wonder how in the world you and I are going to get out, Sport?” For there on every side rose discouraging warm-mashed-potato-walls, which, to his amazement, he found were considerably higher than his head!

“I think the best way will be to sit down,” he finally decided, “and to wait until Susan comes into the dining-room; then I’ll call to her to help us out—up, I mean.” He looked anxiously at the steep walls, towering over him, and, although he was

fond of mashed potato, earnestly hoped that they would not fall and smother him. With Sport clasped in his arms, he sat down to wait for Susan, with what patience he could. No sooner was he seated, however, than he made a most startling discovery, for at his feet he noticed some narrow steep steps, leading downward. This was very odd—very unusual; but Alfred instantly made up his mind that if stairs were there, he—being the owner of the plate—really ought to know where they went to. He therefore put one foot cautiously on the first step, finding it firm, apparently perfectly safe. He peered curiously into the inky blackness below, but could see nothing. Then slowly, carefully, he went on, until he had gone down twenty-two steps! Remembering how thin the plate had always appeared to be, from the outside, he was amazed at the length of the flight.

But plates are deceitful—one never knows what is hidden behind the enamel!

Finally, to the little boy's relief, he had reached the bottom. He was in absolute darkness, save for a dim light, which came from the stairs behind. Sport shivered and whined dismally, and Alfred would have whined, too, if he had been a dog (little boys *never* whine, do they? *Certainly not!*). As it was, he went bravely on, however.

"It is all right, Sport," he whispered. "At least, I think it is. We're discovering things, you know, and look, here's a door" (for his hand had touched the knob of one). It proved to be locked, however, but fortunately the key was there, so Alfred turned it, opened the door, and slowly walked in, and where do you guess he found himself? *In the plate*,—right in the very inside of his own pretty blue and white dinner plate!

He was standing upon one end of the familiar dark-blue bridge, while beneath dashed the river he knew so well! In the distance, he could see the big blue castle, looking stranger and more mysterious than ever. Yes! and, as he raised his eyes, there above him in the white sky were the two blue monstrous birds, flying swiftly, just as they had always done. Sport whined again. He didn't like this blue place at all, and hoped that his young master would go home. But Alfred knew well that he might never have another chance like this, and meant to see all.

"I don't think many children have been inside their own dinner plate," he said, "and I don't want to miss anything. When I was outside, I used to wonder what was in the castle. Now I shall go there first and find out." And he crossed the bridge eagerly.

“Oh,” he shouted, when half way across, “there’s the big white stone. But my! how much bigger it looks now, and that blue spot there is a fish—just see him jump, Sport!”

But Sport would n’t look, and trotted along sadly, trying to see nothing of all these horrid blue sights. Finally the two came to the steep steps that led to the castle, and up they climbed, reaching, when near the top, a stone seat embedded in nodding blue-bells. Here they sat down, while the boy looked about in great interest. From this high place, there was a beautiful view of the whole countryside, with its high surrounding hedge, but instead of the green trees and grass, which we have in our view, it was a bit strange to see so much blue.

The grass, trees, and shrubs were of a deep beautiful blue; the sky above was star-

ing white, except for the two blue birds. They were flying, very evidently flying, for one could see their wings move, and yet, if one glanced away for a moment, and back again, there they were, apparently more exactly in the same spot than before. They were uncommon birds.

Being soon rested, Alfred went on his way, Sport now leashed at his heels. They were nearing the castle.

“I wonder,” whispered the little boy to himself, “whether that something by the castle entrance, which I used to see, is really a person or not?” And he hesitated a moment. Two steps more and his question was answered, for he found himself standing near a boy of about his own age, a little boy who was weeping bitterly. All fear forgotten at this, Alfred went to him, and said kindly:

“Why do you cry? What is the matter?”

At these words, the small boy gave a yell of terror, and darted back through the porch, disappearing within the castle, but not before Alfred had noticed, with astonishment, that his hands and face were *blue*! Soon sounds were heard within and a sobbing woman appeared—a teacher evidently—followed by ten or fifteen children, huddling to her for protection. All were weeping piteously, into damp white handkerchiefs, held to dark-blue faces by dark-blue hands, and their sobs echoed through the empty building in a very sad way.

“What is the matter with you all?” asked Alfred anxiously. “Has some terrible thing happened here?”

The teacher stared curiously at him and then answered brokenly:

“No, nothing has happened. We weep because we have always wept, and we shall continue to weep as long as we live.

But *you*—where did you come from, strange boy?”

“From outside; I just dropped in—for a call, you know,” Alfred explained, carelessly. “But—will you please tell me why you weep all the time?”

Because—Little Outside Boy—*we must!* We are blue, so bitterly, b-b-burstingly blue, that it makes us feel blue!” Here sobs choked the poor woman’s speech, and again the children’s lamentations filled the air. It was depressing, and Alfred began to feel very badly, while little Sport lifted up his head and gave a heart-rending howl! Instantly the teacher and all the children stopped crying, and looked at him.

“What kind of a dog is that?” asked the woman.

“A Skye terrier—a *blue* Skye—that is the valuablest kind, you know,” said Alfred proudly.



She and Alfred seated themselves comfortably on the stone seat by the door.

“Aha! he’s blue,” said the teacher—“that explains it. Poor little dog, come to me!” And Sport (to Alfred’s surprise) went immediately to her. The sobbing teacher then raised her hand and signalled to the children, who burst into tears again, while the little dog howled despairingly, his voice leading all the others!

“Can’t you stop crying for a few moments? I should like to ask you something,” said Alfred, timidly.

“Well,” answered the Blue Lady, “I can stop for just seven minutes. Go back, children. Stay here, little dog. And you boy, speak quickly.”

So she and Alfred seated themselves comfortably on the stone seat by the door.

“First then, are all China-People like you?” began the little boy.

“All the blue ones are, my dear. They must be, you know. French - China -

People are different. They are silly, frivolous beings, and we despise them. We are unblinkingly blue—and we are proud of it.”

“I see,” said Alfred, “But—if you are so terribly unhappy here, why do you stay? I should think you’d go away.”

“We can’t, Boy, for we are, alas! baked in,” answered the Lady, “and then—there is another grave reason. We could not escape, if we wished to, for we are under *guardianship*.” Here her voice trembled a little. “Stop talking, and listen for a moment,” she added. This Alfred did, and a strange confused roaring noise came to his ears, seemingly from all sides! It was a sound which frightened him, very much.

“What is it?” he asked nervously.

“It is—*The Border!*” whispered the Lady, looking scared, herself. Alfred’s

heart began to beat quickly, for he suddenly remembered, for the first time since he had come into his plate, that awful procession of elephants, camels, lions, and so on, which he had dearly loved when he was *outside*, but which now seemed very terrifying indeed.

"If you stand up on the seat, you can see the beasts," whispered the Lady, and as Alfred hesitated, she added, "They cannot harm you, for they, too, are baked in, you know—yes baked—right as they are, in a long endless procession—and the enamel is over them, too!"

Alfred, somewhat reassured, climbed on to the seat, and there, sure enough, he could see plainly. The creatures were all there, roaring ceaselessly, and looking neither to the right nor left, but processioning busily round and round, on the outside edge of everything!

Although it was, of course, a great comfort to remember that the animals were firmly baked in, and with the enamel over them, still there was only a hedge between him and them, and they looked so terribly large, so unusually fierce, and all were roaring so constantly, that the little boy was much troubled.

"I suppose you came down the stairs?" asked the Lady, at this point, "one can to-day, I remember."

"Yes, I did come that way," answered Alfred, "But what do you mean by 'coming to-day?' "

"Why this is the first of April," said the Woman. "You are an April-Fool-Boy, you know, and fools can go anywhere."

The little boy felt uncomfortable at this speech, and remained silent.

"Well," remarked the Lady, after a moment, and taking out a fresh handker-

chief, "Is there anything more you would like to say, for my time is now almost up?"

"No," said Alfred, "I think I shall go home pretty soon, for to tell the truth, I don't like to see people cry—it makes me feel very badly." Then with a sudden remembrance of the terrible Border of Animals, he added quickly:

"I think I'll go home right off."

"Farewell, then," said the Lady. "Leave your dog, but go yourself."

"No indeed," said Alfred firmly, "I cannot leave my dog."

"Why not? He really belongs here," the teacher insisted earnestly, the big tears beginning to roll down her hollow cheeks. "You know yourself, World-Boy, that a Blue-Dog ought to be here in this blue country, and not in the world above."

"Ah, but you see," answered the Boy quickly, "that although as you say, Sport

is blue, he is a *Blue-Skye*, and needs, of course, a blue sky over him! Now, our sky *is* blue, while yours is white," and he pointed to it.

"Alas! and alas!" said the Lady, "what you say is true. Farewell, Boy-from-Outside, Farewell also, Blue-Skye-Dog!" Here all the sobbing children came to her, and the mournful little procession filed sadly into the dim castle entrance!

Alfred and Sport crossed the bridge again, unlocked the door, felt their way up the steep dark steps, guided by the faint light from above, and reached at last, the top! Just as they arrived, there came a sudden *crash!* and then they heard Susan saying!

"Well, well, upon my word, what in the world does this mean?"

Alfred sat up, rubbed his eyes, looked about, and—he did n't know himself what it

did mean, for, if you will credit me, he found himself, *not in the potato hole, at all*, but sitting on his chair at the dinner-table! At his feet was Sport, licking his chops and wagging his tail, while on the floor, and broken in several pieces, lay the pretty blue plate! Of food, there was nothing to be seen, and poor Alfred didn't know, and never *did* know, whether he had eaten his dinner or not. (Sport knew, but—he didn't care to speak of it!)

PRINCE BURSTEN OUDT LARRFEN

ONCE upon a time there lived in Holland a prince whose name was Bursten oudt Larrfen. Of course, with a name like that, he ought to have been extremely gay. But he wasn't, for, sad to say, for some strange reason, he was unable to laugh or even to smile! From birth he had been very unhappy, and spent all his time wiping away the big bitter tears which kept dropping from his poor eyes. At night, as he was very rich, he hired servants to do this for him, so that he himself might get a little sleep.

When he was a baby, his father and mother, who were gay, lively people, were

almost distracted at his sad little face and constant sobs. So they spent all their time trying to make him happy. They had a



He ought to have been extremely gay.

large room filled with funny toys, which would have made most children roar with laughter. There was, for instance, an elephant, who, when you wound him up, wiggled his trunk and winked one eye, and there was a rampageous rag rooster, who

barked like a dog; a little pink pig who could sing like a canary, and a boy doll who coughed in such a natural way, that you longed to give it medicine! Then there was a big fierce-looking soldier, who, if one pressed a spring at his side, would give a shocking howl of fear, turn his back and run away! (It certainly was pretty funny to see a brave soldier do that, was n't it?) But, at all these absurd things, the poor little Prince would look sadly, then take out a fresh pocket-handkerchief and mop his eyes. It was very discouraging, but his parents never stopped trying, and never gave up hope. When the Prince was about fifteen, his father and mother both died, and he became the ruler over the kingdom. He was a good man and a just one, and he longed with all his heart to be happy, to laugh and be merry like other people. So he spent

most of his time in trying to accomplish this. He read all the very funniest books that ever were written, and—wept bitterly after every one ! He visited different countries, and went to many theatres. But his heart-rending sobs, after all the funniest jokes and scenes, made the audiences and even the actors feel so badly that they at last begged him, never to come again !

After this experience, he hired men to tell funny stories to him, but that didn't do at all, for one by one they left, terribly saddened themselves, by merely looking at the poor, woe-begone Prince Bursten oudt Larrfen.

Sadder and sadder he became, till even little children would run away, when they saw him coming. At last, the unfortunate Prince decided to give up trying to live among people, and putting all his business into the hands of his High-chief-head-

steward, went alone to a rustic hut which he had had built in the deep dark wood, where the tall gloomy trees were gloomiest.

Prince Bursten loved the forest and never would allow any of the trees to be chopped down.

Now, near his hut, there stood the tallest and most magnificent oak-tree in the whole forest, and in it lived the Lady of the Trees. The Prince did not know this, for no one could see her, as she was shy and kept herself hidden, but there she was, nevertheless! A busy lady was she, for all green growing things of the forest were under her care. She it was who announced the coming of spring and who called to the sleepy little new leaves and buds to "come out!" She who chose the time for them to don their gorgeous autumn clothing, and who broke tenderly, at last, the news that the cold winter was at hand, and that all might rest.

There in the old oak-tree she dwelt happily, ever beautiful, ever young. Her golden hair hung behind in two long heavy braids which touched the ground, and her pretty gown was soft and clinging, and was just the color of air.

Now it was her one wish and her command, that all within her forest country should live in peace and perfect happiness.

So of course, it was a *terrible* thing for her, to have Bursten oudt Larrfen, who was at that time probably, the saddest man in all the world, come and live there near her, in the forest. She watched him at first with interest, then pity, and then great sadness. Finally, she decided that something must be done, and at once. So she went to a very silent place in the forest, where no one had ever been, except herself. Here, on a mossy stone, she sat quietly for a long time, and then a radiant

smile overspread her face, for an idea had come to her.

Hurrying home, she summoned a big gray squirrel, and going to the edge of the wood, pointed to the village, and gave careful instructions, to which the squirrel listened respectfully. Then he whisked his tail excitedly, and scampered away.

The Tree Lady walked slowly back along the wood path, stopping every few moments to say something to the different wild-flowers, which nodded in pleased recognition. Here she turned the white face of a very large and beautiful daisy toward the path, whispering a word as she did so; there she told a drooping lady's-slipper to "stand up straight"; next she stopped a bird, a brilliant scarlet tanager (who was darting by, to keep an appointment), spoke a word of command to him, and passed on, finally reaching her own tree-house, tired but

happy, for everything was now ready for her plan. And this is what happened:

The very next afternoon, a little girl who lived in the village, went out to pick berries.

"Don't go into the forest, Hilda," said her mother, "or you might get lost."

Now when Hilda's pail was filled with bouncing fat berries, she sat down for a moment to rest, before going home. Suddenly a big gray squirrel came near, very near, and said cordially: "Chit! Chit! Chit!"

"Oh, you darling!" cried little Hilda, and quite forgetting what her mother had said about not going into the wood, she jumped up and ran quickly after him. When the squirrel had gone but a short distance, he stopped to say "Chit! Chit!" again, allowing Hilda to get near, a-l-m-o-s-t near enough to catch him, when off he whisked again, with a saucy flirt of his tail! Hilda thought him a naughty little fellow, but *he*

was happy, for he knew that he was obeying the Lady of the Trees.

She had commanded him to go to the first little child he saw near the forest, and try to coax it to follow him up the path, and he had succeeded beautifully.

Before very long, however, Hilda grew tired of following the squirrel, and was about to turn back, when she suddenly saw, growing a little farther down the path, a very big daisy, which kept its pretty white face turned temptingly toward the path. (It had been carefully doing this every single minute since the Lady of the Trees had told it to.)

“Oh,” cried the child, “that is a ’normous daisy and I must pick it.”

Having done so, she spied, but a wee bit farther down the path, a tall and very splendid lady’s-slipper, which was standing up, wonderfully straight (just as the Forest

Lady had commanded). That too, Hilda decided she must surely have, and went on to pick it. She had now wandered far into the wood, and was somewhat frightened, as it was late and beginning to grow dark. Turning to find the path home, she was surprised to see, sitting quietly on a nearby tree-branch, a beautiful scarlet bird, which did not seem in the least afraid, but which looked at her steadily, with bright and friendly black eyes. Hilda, who dearly loved birds, stood there silently for a moment. Then the pretty creature flew down to the path, and hopped very slowly farther into the darkening wood. The little girl felt sure that she could catch it, so forgetting all else, she eagerly followed the tanager on and on!

But the forest grew darker and darker, and now the deceitful little scarlet bird, having brought Hilda to the very place

mentioned by the Lady of the Trees, suddenly stopped, rose high into the air, chirped shrilly once, as he flew, and although the child below strained her eyes trying to see him, he disappeared!

In the topmost branches of the tree into which he flew, lay the Tree-Lady, swinging lightly in a hammock of intertwined branches. The tanager perched on a nearby twig, and whispered softly,

“Dear Queen, the squirrel, the daisy, the lady’s-slipper and I, have done as you commanded. Below stands a girl-child.”

“I thank you all, dear little friends!” said she, and the happy tanager flew away.

Meanwhile, poor Hilda looked about, and was terribly frightened, for she didn’t know where she was. She could see no trace of the path! It was dark in the woods and the big trees looked tall and unfriendly, living their lives ’way up there,

above the earth. Tears began to fall rapidly down Hilda's cheeks. Then suddenly, to her surprise and delight, she discovered near by, a small rough hut, its lighted windows brightly cozy in the darkness. Running to it, she was about to knock, when she was startled by the sound of heart-rending moans from within. Horribly frightened, timid little Hilda now



burst into loud sobs, so loud that Prince Bursten oudt Larrfen, within the hut, heard them, stopped weeping himself, and jumping to his feet, listened in sheer amazement!

For this was the first and only time that the Prince had heard another person cry! Everyone who had approached him

before, had been commanded to be gay—to smile always; and to hear this child cry, shocked him so much, that for the moment, he stopped weeping himself, and ran to the hut door where he found Hilda.

“What are you doing, child?” he asked.

“Crying, sir,” sobbed Hilda.

“Impossible! You can’t be crying, you know,” said the Prince bewildered. “I am the only one who ever cries.”

But this, Hilda did not seem to know, for she again burst out in wild lamentations.

“*Why* do you weep?” inquired Bursten, in his kind voice, for he was always kind.

“I’m lost,” sobbed Hilda.

“Lost?” echoed the Prince. “Where then do you live?”

“In Bindelstein-am-Lager,” answered Hilda.

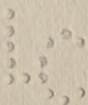
“So, so?” said the Prince, “Nun, that is a long distance from here; moreover, it is

now too dark to find the path. Should we try to do so, we should both be lost in the big forest. Come in, child, stay the night with me, and to-morrow I will take you home to your mother."

But at this, Hilda wept louder than ever, while the bewildered Prince put his arm tenderly about her, led her inside the hut, and to the splendid fire, which was roaring gaily up the chimney.

And neither glanced up into the big tree, or they might have seen between the parted branches, the smiling face of the Tree-Lady! Nor did the Prince look out of the door later, or he would have seen her dancing in the moonlight: a little gray squirrel, a scarlet tanager, and other shy wild creatures her only spectators. But Bursten was devoting his whole time to Hilda, who refused to be comforted.

First, he gave her a fine supper of goat's



milk, black bread, honey, and berries, and she, being very hungry, choked back her sobs just long enough to eat. Then she began to cry again, louder than ever.

“Oh, what can I do, my dear, to comfort you?” cried the poor Prince at last, quite at his wits’ end. “Can’t you yourself think of something I might do?”

"Amuse me!" sobbed Hilda.

“B-But,” stammered Bursten “it has never been like that, child! I don’t know how to amuse people, for all my life people have tried to amuse *me!*”

“How did they do it?” inquired Hilda, looking at him with streaming eyes.

“Oh, in many different ways,” answered the Prince, “but, alas! it never did any good, not any.”

“Perhaps it might work better with me?” suggested Hilda who, comfortably fed and

housed, was beginning, in spite of herself, to feel a bit more contented.

“Well,” protested the Prince, staring at her, “I assure you it has never been like this before, but I’ll try. I’ll carve something for you.” (The Prince, like all his subjects, could carve beautifully). He procured a sharp knife and a bit of soft white pine that looked like cheese, and with a strange, new feeling at his heart, he sat down by the child’s side, suddenly remembering that he had not cried a cry, nor sobbed a sob, for a long time!

“Let me see,” he remarked thoughtfully, “when I was your age, Hilda, I remember that the carvers used to carve funny animals for me!”

“Then do ’em,” commanded the child, and—the Prince did.

By the light of the big hearth fire, he cut out a cow with a cat’s head, and when

Hilda saw it, she began to laugh, at first softly, then louder and louder, till the hut was filled with the sweet sound!

"Now when they carved for me, I never used to do that. I never even smiled," said the Prince, looking wistfully at the child.

"What did you do?"

"Cried, of course! Cried and cried and cried!" said Bursten.

"Not when they made such funny animals?" asked Hilda.

"Yes, when they did,—and even when they didn't," he admitted.

"Then," said Hilda decidedly, "you were a horrid, selfish little boy."

"You must not say such rude things to me," remarked the Prince severely.

Hilda's lips began to quiver. "But it was horrid of you to cry, sir, now wasn't it, when people were trying so hard to make you happy?"

“It may be so. No one ever told me,—no one would have dared to speak thus to me,” said the Prince.

“Perhaps you would have been a better little boy if some one *had* dared,” ventured Hilda.

And the man, looking at the child, said slowly, though somewhat unsteadily, “perhaps—perhaps you are right, little one.”

Neither of them noticed that at that moment, the door of the hut opened soundlessly, while a lovely face peered in at them! At the Prince’s words, a smile passed over it, and the door closed gently.

Meanwhile, Bursten continued his funny carving. He next made a horse—that is a kind of one, for the poor creature had a horse’s body, but, astonishing to tell, he had only two legs!

At this beast, Hilda laughed still more, and Bursten watched her intently, the

strange feeling within, growing greater each moment.

“Ha! Ha! Ha!” shouted Hilda, and then—suddenly—*someone else* in the room began to laugh—a strange, hoarse chuckle! The Prince looked about to see if anyone had entered the hut, but he and the child were alone.

“Who—who laughed just then?” he asked hoarsely.

“I did,” answered Hilda.

“But, surely, someone else laughed, also?”

“Only *you*,” said the little girl calmly. “You laughed too, at that funny, funny horse bird,” and again the sound of the child’s mirth filled the room. Prince Bursten said nothing, but, jumping to his feet, hurried to a mirror which hung upon the wall, gazed within, and gave a loud cry of joy. It was indeed an unfamiliar face which he

saw there, for although it was his own, it was no longer the sad, woe-begone face of the unhappy prince, but instead, a pleasant, merry one! He tried to smile, as he had attempted to do, over and over, in the unhappy past, and found to his unspeakable joy, that he was now *able to do so!* He smiled on both sides of his face, trying each in turn, and found that it was just as easy to do it on one side, as on the other!

Then Prince Bursten sat down and shed tears, but this time they were joy-tears which, as everyone knows, are pleasant things to shed.

The following day, he took little Hilda to Bindelstein, and left her with her happy mother, who had spent the whole night trying to find her lost child. From there the Prince went to his own home, and when his people saw him they did not know him.

“This gay, smiling man *can not* be our

sad Bursten," they cried. "No, 't is impossible!"

The Prince gave out a notice, commanding all to meet him that evening in the Council-chamber, as he wished to tell them something important.

In the morning, he went to a children's hospital, and with him he took some of his amusing mechanical toys, and the sick children shouted with laughter. But no one laughed more heartily than the Prince himself!

In the afternoon, he visited a Home for Old People, bringing with him some very funny books, which he read aloud to the inmates, who laughed heartily, but—no one was merrier than he!

In the evening, when the people had gathered in the Council-chamber, the Prince came to them and said these words:

"My friends, although I am the Prince

Bursten oudt Larrfen, I have, as you know, always been called 'The Saddest Man on Earth.' And it was true. Why was I sad, my people? It was because during all these years—during my whole life, in fact, I have *lived for myself alone!* But a lesson has now been taught me, taught me by a little child. From this time on, I am going to live for other people, and I shall be happy and gay, so that in the future, whenever my name is spoken, all will say, 'The Prince is indeed well-named!'" Here a radiant smile lighted his features, and the people seeing it, rose to a man, shouting and laughing with joy!

In this merriment he joined, and no laugh rang out so cheerily or lasted as long as that of the Prince Bursten oudt Larrfen!

THE LAUGHING HORSE

I

MAC was a colt, and he lived in a pleasant field near a village. His mother lived there, too, when she wasn't being driven round the country by her master. Mac was very pretty. In color he was entirely black, except for a white star on his forehead. His coat was wonderfully glossy, and his full mane, and long tail which touched the ground behind, were the envy and admiration of all the other horses in the field.

On a hot day, several months before this story begins, Mac found lying in the field, a book of jokes, which some one had carelessly left there. On the outside cover was printed :

*These Fokes
are funny enough
to
Make a Horse Laugh.*

Mac looked at the book with interest.

“Well, I declare!” said he. He could read a little—just enough to read the covers of books. “Funny enough to make a horse laugh,” he repeated. “Now, I am glad I found this, for I am a horse, and I’d like to laugh!”

Being young and foolish, Mac thought he would eat a few of the book-pages and thus find out whether what it said were true. So he tore off some leaves with his sharp teeth, and chewed them into a nice slimy ball, which he swallowed. Liking the rich beefy flavor, he ate a few more leaves, from the other end of the book. These too, he found pleasant, and so the

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silly fellow finally gobbled the entire volume.

Up to this time, Mac had always been a gentle, serious-minded colt, but now a sudden change came over him—he grew frolicsome, spirited, and gay. For after having eaten this whole book of jokes, he was *full of fun*, you see! Moreover, the book had taught him to do what no horse had ever been known to do before, for, can you believe me, when I tell you that it had taught him *how to laugh*! Not only did he know how, but he did laugh—right out loud—“*Haw! Haw! Haw!*”

When his mother found that her little son could do this extraordinary thing, she made up her mind that it was the star on his forehead which had probably caused it.

“I never did like that star,” she said bitterly. “None of the family ever had one! By my mane and tail, I should n’t wonder

if it were magic, and had upset the dear boy's brain!" But she scolded him roundly just the same, and it didn't do a bit of good, either, for he only laughed the louder—"Ha! Haw! Ho!"

Anything that seemed in the least funny he would laugh at, and as almost everything did seem funny to him, he was always laughing! He was wise enough, however, not to do it when there were people near, for his mother had warned him that if he did so he would never be sold. "No one will buy a 'Laughing Horse' if he can help it," said she.

One day, after Mac had grown up, he was sold to a dear little girl, named Mary. She was delighted with the pretty creature, and he was much pleased at the thought of going out into the strange world.

When he went away, his mother said earnestly to him: "Now be a good kind

horse, and oh, my son, remember, if you must laugh, do so in the privacy of the stable—but *never in public!*”

These words Mac tried to keep always in mind, although it was sometimes hard. For many months everything went well. He was kindly treated, had good food, and was in a fine, light stable from which there was a pretty view of the Merrimac River.

As the weeks went on, the little girl—Mary—grew fonder and fonder of dear Mac. Then came a sad day, the day when Mac—forgot! It was in the morning, and Mary was riding along through the main street of the town, walking her horse, as usual. Just after she had passed the town drinking-fountain, a fat woman came waddling out of a shop, with many parcels in her arms. She started to cross the street, when in some way the poor thing slipped and fell



Mac saw this, and began to laugh

heavily to the ground, her bundles scattering in every direction !

Mac saw this, and thinking it very funny, and quite forgetting all his good resolutions, lifted his head and *began to laugh* at the poor woman ! “ *Ha ! Ha ! Ha !* ” he shouted. “ *Haw ! Haw ! Haw !* ”

Little Mary was frightened and sat there listening, scarcely able to believe her ears ! The fat woman, too, was so startled that she jumped to her feet and forgot she was hurt ! Then, Mary, making up her mind that the whooping-cough or some dreadful illness had suddenly come to poor Mac, quickly dismounted and gazed anxiously up at him. People came running to see who was making the loud noise, and finding that it was a horse, stood staring with open mouths. Mary was both frightened and mortified, as you may imagine, but Mac never noticed it.

“ *Ha ! ha ! ha !* ” he said, still more, the

great noise seeming to fill the whole street! A big crowd quickly gathered, and finally a policeman was called, who sent the people away and put the little girl on her horse again. Meanwhile, Mac had gotten over his mirth and had come to his senses. He was surprised to see the crowd of people, and realizing perfectly why they were there, was truly ashamed, and trotted quickly away!

But, alas! from that time on, having once laughed in this public way, Mac could not seem to control himself any more, and almost every time Mary rode, he would be sure to see something which he thought funny, and at which he would laugh uproariously.

Once when the older sister, Katharine, happened to be on his back, they met a little fellow who was trying to ride a bicycle. He was lurching from side to side of the street, and, of course, he did look funny. But kind-

hearted Katharine did not even smile, fearing that she might hurt his feelings. Mac had no scruples as to that, however, and stopping short in the middle of the street he guffawed loudly! The scared small-boy-bicycler fell this time completely off his machine, while poor Katharine sat quietly, shedding tears of mortification. She never rode him after that.

In a few weeks Mac became celebrated, and all the townspeople kept a sharp lookout for the black horse with the white star on his forehead. Whenever he appeared (Mary upon his back) the word would be passed along, and admiring people follow in his wake, hoping they might get the chance to hear him laugh.

And Mac seldom disappointed them, for he was happy, and felt like laughing all the time when he saw how very popular he had become. Mary, however, was far from

happy. Not that the people were ever rude to her, but it was very unpleasant for a little girl to be followed everywhere by a crowd of people!

At last, she made up her mind that this could go on no longer—that although she loved Mac, she must part with him. He was so gentle, kind, and safe, that he would be a good horse for ladies and children to drive. But, alas! although her father tried very hard, he was unable to find any ladies or children who were willing to buy, for apparently no one wanted to own a “Laughing Horse”!

In the meantime, men kept coming to the house, asking to see the now famous “Mac,” and the family were much annoyed by it. They had no privacy, as the grounds and stable-yard were quite filled with people, on pleasant days. The stable-door had to be kept locked, at all times. At last, two

strong policemen were called in to keep order.

In the end, Mary's father sold Mac to a circus. The manager assured the little girl that her horse should always have the best of food and care.

"If he should ever get over the laughing habit," said she, "will you promise to let me know at once, so that I can buy him back?" And the man promised to do so. "We call him 'Mac,' for short, but his whole name is Merrimac. He was named for the Merrimac River," explained Mary.

"And a very good name it is," said the man, "for he certainly is a *Merry Mac*." Here he laughed loudly at his own joke, and the horse (who liked a joke on himself) was evidently amused too, for he joined in, with a lusty "*Haw! Haw!*" Then, still laughing, the two, man and horse, walked slowly down the avenue and away!

II

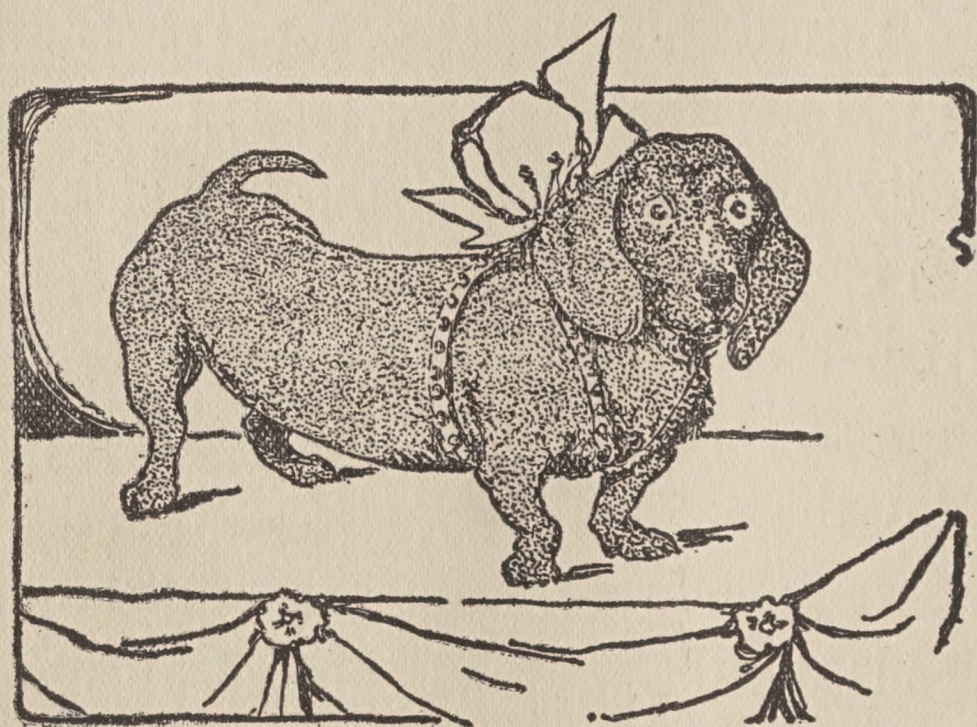
Mac was very kindly treated at the circus, and proved to be the most popular animal there. He stood alone on a platform, and wore round his neck a most becoming broad blue sash-ribbon! He laughed heartily every day, and the crowd would laugh back,—hugely tickled.

At first, Mac liked the clowns, and thought them extremely funny, but he soon grew tired of them. One day, a long, thin dachshund happened to walk through the tent with his master, and as soon as the horse caught sight of it, he simply roared with laughter!

A dachshund was then bought for Mac's own particular use, and brought to him each day. The poor little dog did not like to be laughed at, but he could not help himself.

After six months, Mac grew very tired

of the circus life—of the dreadful noise, dust, and confusion. He began to long then, with all his heart, to get away from it, and to return, if possible, to his old home



The poor little dog did not like to be laughed at.

and his little mistress. But, of course, as long as he continued to laugh merrily, so long would "Merry Mac" be kept. He knew this, but the laughing-habit was now too strongly fixed, and he feared that he should be a circus-horse as long as he

lived! Which shows that he knew nothing at all about it. For see what happened—and within a short time, too.

Just next him in the circus, there lived a Gnu. A Gnu is an animal somewhat like a horse, a trifle like an ox, and a wee bit like a buffalo! Now, it is confusing to be yourself, and yet to look like so many different animals, and so it is perhaps not strange that the Gnu is queer—awfully queer! This particular one, however, was quite a settled down old fellow. He gnu a lot—and he *gnu* he gnu!

Well, poor Mac was grumbling one day, about the stupid life he led in the circus, and regretting that he was there.

“Then why do you stay?” remarked the Gnu, coldly. “They keep you here because you laugh. Stop laughing—and they will send you away.”

“Oh, but I can’t,” groaned Mac. “When

I see anything funny, I simply *must* laugh—I cannot seem to control myself.”

“Cannot control yourself? *Ughlaboohoo-ragh!*” snorted the Gnu contemptuously, adding, “Then you must be ill. Better take some medicine!”

“Medicine? Where can I get some?”

“There is a bottle standing right there by your platform,” said the Gnu. “It belongs to our keeper who takes some every day. *He* never laughs—he never even smiles.”

“That is true,” said Mac. “But do you suppose ’t is the medicine that makes him so sad?”

“I do, in fact, I know it, for the medicine is—*cod-liver-oil*.”

“Oh, is it? And do you think it would have the same effect on me—make me sad too, and stop my laughing?”

But to this question the Gnu said contemptuously: “*Ughlabuzzztsuzchoo*” and

after that, he refused to say another word !

Mac looked about, and soon found the medicine-bottle ; in it a thick yellow liquid. He deftly pulled the cork, and said to himself, "Master takes a little, but I, being so much bigger, had better take it all !" So he tipped up the bottle, and bravely drank the entire contents. After having done it, he suddenly realized that the taste of the oil was not pleasant—that it was bad—that it was, in fact, *nasty* and *horrid*. It was real cod-liver-oil, and the taste was all there. Taken as *you* take it (with the bit of peppermint, before and after) it is fine—it is all right, but taken as poor Mac took it, it is all wrong !

Through the night, the wretched horse was very ill, so ill, in fact, that he feared he should never be well in all the wide world ! "Alas, this is not what I expected," he

moaned, "I only wanted the medicine to make me feel just sad enough, so that I should not wish to *laugh* any more!"

The next day he was much better, however, but to his delight, he found that he still continued to feel very unhappy in mind, the reason for this being that he could not get rid of, or forget, the awful *thick* taste of that slippery-slimy, cod-liver-oil!

"I really feel now as if I should never laugh again!" he cried happily. "'T is indeed a wonderful medicine, and I think it has done exactly what I wanted it to."

In the afternoon, when the circus opened, the crowd poured into the animal-tent, and looked eagerly up to Mac, who looked sadly back at them. He knew he should disappoint them this time, and he was sorry for that. At quarter past two, the keeper brought in the dachshund and put him, as usual, on the stand in front of the horse.

“Now, ladies and gents, stand back!” he shouted, “and listen to the wonderful Laughing Horse, the magnificent, mirthful Merry Mac!”

The crowd did stand back, and did listen, and they heard the magnificent mirthful Merry Mac give—instead of his usual jovial “*Haw! Haw!*”—the most awful, and heart-rending *groan*, that you can think of!

At this, there was great confusion in the circus, and the manager came hurrying up.

“He won’t laugh at the dachshund?” he asked. “Then get another! He will surely be amused, when he sees *two* of ’em!”

This was immediately done, and the new dog placed on the other corner of Mac’s platform. But, alas! although the little fellow was funnier than the first, being four inches longer and six or seven inches thinner, it was of no use! Mac looked at him, and then just as he was going to laugh,

suddenly remembered the thick yellow taste of the oil, and groaned even more loudly than before!

The manager was sure, now, that the horse was ill, and felt very badly about it. For several days Mac was tenderly cared for, in the hope that he would soon be himself again.

But he was n't, and he evidently could n't be. Then, the manager (remembering his promise) wrote to Mary and told her that the "Laughing Horse" was no longer a "Laughter," and that she might buy him again if she wished to. So Mary's brother Joseph, went to the circus and brought Mac back to his dear old home, where the little girl and her sister received him with joy.

Since then, Mac has been as good as a very good kitten, and he and Mary are happy to be together again, and—*that's all!*

PLEASE

THERE was once a little word named "Please," which lived in a small boy's mouth. Pleases live in everybody's mouth, though people often forget they are there.

Now, all Pleases, to be well, should be taken out of the mouth frequently, and allowed to get the air. They are like little fishes, you know, who come popping up from the wet water, every once in a while, to breathe.

This particular Please lived in the mouth of a boy named Dick, but, unfortunately, it seldom got a chance to get out. For Dick, I am sorry to say, was a rude little boy, who scarcely ever remembered to say "Please."

"Gimme some bread! I want some

water!" or "Gimme that book!" was the unpleasant way in which he would ask for things! His father and mother felt very badly about this, but hoped each week to see a change for the better.

His father said to him one day: Dick,

"When you want some custard-pie

Say—'*please!*'

Or need help to tie your tie

Say—'*please!*'

If you want some mashed potato

Or you wish to borrow Plato,

All you've got to say is just—

'*Please! Please!*'"

At this, Dick laughed heartily, but still forgot to obey! As for the poor Please itself, it would sit up on the roof of the boy's mouth day after day, hoping for a chance to get out, but growing weaker and more discouraged all the time.

Now, Dick had a brother John, who was very old—almost *ten*! This boy was just as polite as Dick was rude, so that his Please had plenty of exercise, and more fresh air than he could use.

One day at breakfast, Dick's Please became desperate. He felt that he must have some fresh air or—die; so the poor thing took matters into his own hands, of his own account came out of his own home-mouth, breathed deeply the pleasant air, and then—crept timidly across the table, and jumped into John's mouth!

The Please-who-lived-there, was very indignant. "Get out! You don't belong here!" he cried. "This is *my* mouth!"

"I know it," replied Dick's Please feebly. "I live opposite, in the brother of this mouth. But, alas! I am unhappy there, for I am never used—never have a chance to get a breath of fresh air! I thought you

might be willing, sir, to let me stay here for a day or so—until I felt stronger.”

“Why certainly,” said the other Please, kindly. “I see now that you are in a bad condition. Remain, and when my young master uses me, we will both go out of his mouth together. He is kind, and I am sure he would n’t mind saying ‘Please’ *twice*.”

The matter had scarcely been thus satisfactorily settled, when John happened to want some butter, and this is what he said: “Papa, will you pass me the butter, please—please?”

“Certainly,” said his father, “but why so extremely polite?”

John made no answer, but turning to his mother, said: “Mamma, will you give me the muffins, please—please?”

Mamma laughed. “You shall have the muffins, dear, but why do you say please twice?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “The words seem to just jump out, somehow. Katie, please—please some water?” he went on. The poor boy was really startled, when he found, that in spite of himself, he had to double his words each time!

“Well,” remarked Papa, “there is no harm done. One can’t be too ‘pleasing,’ in this world.”

Meanwhile little Dick, who had been shouting: “Gimme an egg! I want some milk! Gimme a spoon!” in his usual rude way, became interested at hearing so many “please pleases” issuing from his brother’s mouth, and thought *he* would try the word too (not knowing, of course, that his own little “please” had gone from him). So copying John’s manner of speaking, he began politely: “Mamma, will you give me the muffins, m-m-m-?” At this point, he tried to say “please” but—how could he, when

he could n't? Then, he asked for some fruit, but with the same sad result!



She put them both to bed early.

“Will you give me some fruit, m-m-m-m?” was all he could manage to say. At last he burst into tears!

This horrid state of affairs continued throughout the day, John “please, pleasing,” and little Dick “m-m-m, m-m-m-ing” while their poor mother was almost distracted! She put them both to bed early, after rub-

bing their throats thoroughly with camphorated oil, nux vomica, and beef extract! As an extra precaution, she flannel-banded them, for she feared that some mysterious new throat-disease, had seized upon the children!

The following day made matters right again, however, for at the breakfast-table, Dick's "please" returned to him, rested and rosy from the fresh air.

The next time John wanted the bread, he was able to say: "May I have the bread, please?" without any horrid second word to torment and frighten him.

To little Dick's delight, he found that *he* need now no longer say "m-m-m," but could say "please" just as well and as easily as John himself. He was so glad, and liked the sound of it so very well, that from that time on, he kept saying it, and became exactly as polite as his brother!

THE CLOCK-TICK WHO RAN AWAY

THERE was once upon a time a Clock-Tick, who lived in a tall, dignified mahogany Clock, in a comfortable country-house. The Master of the house wound the Clock every Saturday morning, and when he did so, he would whistle "Yankee Doodle," while his little son Billy, stood nearby. It is much better to have two Clock-winders, if possible, for then one can direct, you see, the other wind, and if at the same time, one whistles a patriotic air, why—so much the better!

But this morning Billy was upstairs with—guess what? The measles! After breakfast, therefore, Papa having no one to

remind him, forgot to wind the Clock, and went directly to town, while Mamma hurried up-stairs, to Billy.

The Clock, being a faithful painstaking creature, finding himself unwound, with his weights way down, instead of way up, tried hard to go on by himself, and keep his usual excellent time, but he was unable to do so, and to his distress, before long, his Pendulum began to go slower, and s-l-o-w-e-r and s—l—o—w— and then —*stopped*, the hands pointing at quarter before twelve!

The Tick crawled up on the Pendulum, and sat there, as they always do when clocks stop. From the first, they are taught under such circumstances, to sit quietly on the Pendulum, until the “go-ahead” signal is given to the Clock Hands, when they all begin work again. But it seems that this Tick was not like others of his family. If

he had been, this story would never have been written. No, this particular Tick was a gay fellow. He never could keep still one single second. He liked to be where something was going on—where he could have a good time. This he always had had of course, when the Clock was wound—a perfect time, in fact, but now, the unusual silence within the Clock house, quite scared him. So to keep up his courage, he began to “Tick-tick, tick-tick,” *all by himself!*

“Hush!” said the Clock sternly. “You must n’t tick on your own account—’t is against the rules. Don’t you see that I have stopped?”

“*I have n’t,*” the Tick said saucily, with a gay giggle! The Pendulum, shocked at such conduct, shook him violently. Much disgusted at this, the little Clock-tick decided to leave home, and go out into the

room, for a few moments. So he slipped slowly through the key-hole!

"Come back," roared the indignant Clock.

"Tick-tick," said he.

"Come back here at once!" screamed the Pendulum.

"*I won't*—I'm too awfully tick-tick-tickled to get away," replied the rude young thing! He was very small, and being quite invisible, felt delightfully free to wander about as fancy led. There were many gaily-bound books in the room in which he found himself, and the sun was shining pleasantly through two large windows at one end. In this window hung a golden cage, containing a canary-bird, who was singing songs so very quickly that the Clock-tick could n't understand what he said. But he liked the songs, so hopped toward the window, and finally on to the cage itself.

The Bird soon finished his song, and stopped a moment to eat his 549th seed. The Tick, happy in his new freedom, and with the warm sun shining upon him, said pleasantly:

“Tick-tick! tick-tick!” But no sooner had the words been spoken, than the Canary, hearing them, was frightened almost out of his little yellow senses, and flew frantically from side to side, screaming shrilly for somebody, to come and take away this unseen enemy! The Tick, disappointed at his reception, hopped down and wandered about the room, “ticking, ticking” to himself. No one heard him, however, except the Canary. Soon he wandered out into the hall, and seeing what he thought was a fur rug, jumped on to it, “Tick-ticking” as he did so.

The rug proved to be no rug, however, but instead, a big shaggy Dog, who was

having a mid-day snooze by the front door. The loud noise of the "ticking" waked him at once. He sat up and listened in-



He sat up and listened intently.

tently, then growled, and carefully examined the premises, finding however, nothing suspicious there. Suddenly, he discovered that the strange sound came, apparently, from his own back! At this, he became

even more frightened than the Canary had been, and began to race madly about the hall! Round the sitting-room he flew; in and out the furniture, under tables, over chairs, and round things, he scurried!

At first the Tick was amused, and quite enjoyed the swift exhilarating motion—it was like being on an automobile, particularly, when they dashed round sharp dangerous turns. Finally he grew tired, however, and hopped from the dog's back to the table in the hall, thence to a high shelf on the wall, where there was a small and very straight-standing wooden man, dressed plainly but richly, in a shining suit of tin. The excited dog, finding that the awful "ticking" had left him now, lay down with lolling tongue, and tail tight-folded between his legs!

At this moment, from the dining-room, came the sound of a musical gong. And

the family—all but the poor measles-boy—came down to luncheon, three children and the mother. After they were seated, the Tick jumped down from the shelf, and followed, full of interest and curiosity as to where they had gone, and why. He found them gathered round a table, and, uninvited, he hopped up and seated himself on a ripe red apple in the fruit dish, in the middle.

He stole about silently, being too out of breath to tick for the moment. Now, however, from his comfortable seat on the crimson apple he began again his song, the slow, measured “Tick-tick, tick-tick,” of the old clock. At first, he was unheard, for the children were *all* talking at once, to their poor mother! Then, after Katie had passed the soup, there came a pause, and the mother said:

“How very loudly the old clock ticks to-day!”

“Yes, I noticed that,” said John, the oldest boy, “but it can’t be the clock, mother, for see, it is n’t going, and anyway, that sound is nearer at hand. Who has a watch?”

But it turned out, that no one had a watch, except Mamma, and hers was a small gold affair, with a very delicate, ladylike ticklet.

“It must be some insect,” said little Helen.

“It can’t be,” said the third child. “It would have to be as large as a cat, to make as loud a noise as that.”

“Well, I ’m going to find out what it is,” said the mother, at this point, “for I cannot allow such a ticking in my house and not know where it comes from.” So she rose from the table, went into the hall, and began the search, the children, in great excitement, darting here and there.

"Tick-tick, tick-tick, tick-tick!"

"The sound seems to be in the dining-room," said the mother, at last, having searched the hall and living-room thoroughly. Listening carefully, she approached the table itself.

The Clock-tick became alarmed at this, and, in a frantic effort to escape, skipped from place to place. At last he found himself near the front door, and although he had not planned to do so, with but a moment's hesitation, he popped through the key-hole, into the outside world, leaving the baffled family behind!

He sat for a moment quietly on the porch, and then seeing a pleasant-looking man approach, he hopped nimbly on to his shoulder.

"Tick-tick," he said cordially.

"Great Scott! What was that?" cried the startled man.

"Tick-tick," was the polite answer.

But the man was alarmed. First, he took off his hat, examining it carefully to see if anything were there. Then he brushed his shoulders vigorously, first one, then the other. At that, off came the little Tick for unfortunately, it was on that very other shoulder, that he was sitting!

"No one seems to want me," he said to himself softly. Just then, he noticed two ladies getting into a carriage, which was standing by the sidewalk.

"Drive as quickly as possible to the railroad station," directed one.

Now the Clock-tick did n't know what a railway station was, of course, but he decided that he would go there, anyway, so he jumped on to the horse's back, then on to his head, where he cuddled down into a soft place between the ears.

"Trot-trot, trot-trot," went the horse,

and pleased with the fine view and exhilarating motion, the Clock-tick began his "Tick-tick, tick-tick!"

The horse, hearing it, shook his head violently, supposing that a strange new kind of fly had come to him, but the "tick-ticking" went steadily on. Finding that he could not get rid of it, the poor horse became terrified, and gave some bucks that he had n't done for years. Then, finally, *he ran away.*

The Clock-tick, knowing well what was the cause of his fright, jumped from the maddened animal's head to his back, then to the dashboard, and from that to the top of the carriage, from which point he expressed by loud ticks his contempt for the silly horse, who could become so awfully frightened by so little a thing.

After a short but exciting run, the horse finally stopped of his own accord, and

hearing, to his relief, no more mysterious noises, became again a meek, tired-out, livery-stable horse. On they drove to the station, and it was now so late that the two ladies had barely time to catch their train, which came roaring and crashing up, just as they arrived.

This time, it was the Clock-tick who was terrified! He knew nothing about railroad trains, of course, and had never dreamed that anything could possibly make such a noise! Right in the very middle of the loudest roaring, puffing, and crashing, there came two ear-piercing, blood-curdling shrieks from the engine itself, and the poor Clock-tick felt that the end of all had surely come. He leaped from the carriage, ran swiftly down the street, turned the corner, and without thinking what he was doing, jumped directly on to the head of a fat grocery cat, who was com-

fortably sunning herself, by her master's door.

She had no idea that he was there, until he began to tick. Then she sat up, arched her back, and moved her tail slowly from side to side. Finding that by doing these things, she had failed to alarm the "ticking" creature, she became frightened herself! She jumped and she squirmed, she humped up her back terrifically, and then she began to go round and round, faster and faster and faster!

Finally the Tick became very dizzy, and could only gasp out unevenly, his "Tick-tick, tickety-tick-tick"!

People soon gathered, and looked pityingly at the poor frightened cat, thinking that she must be having a fit! But suddenly she stopped whirling, lifted her tail stiffly, and began to *spit*. And she s-s-pat so furiously, and she s-s-sput so loudly that

everybody was amazed at her! As for the poor little Clock-tick, never having met an angry cat before, he didn't know at first what to think, but then made up his mind that the beast must be turning into another engine like the monster from which he had just fled! At that awful thought, trembling with fright, he jumped from the cat's back, and ran quite a distance down the street before he dared stop! Then he caught sight of an enormous dog approaching, and not feeling strong enough to meet him, he ran up the side of a tall brick building (for Ticks can do this difficult thing). Up on the roof it was cool and airy, and he rested quietly for a few moments, under the shelter of a broad, motherly-looking chimney.

Suddenly he heard a very loud rhythmic noise just above, a noise which, somehow, didn't seem very terrifying, as it had quite a familiar sound. He listened.

“TICK-TICK, TICK-TICK!” it boomed out in a monstrous big voice.

What could it mean? The Clock-tick looked up, and there he saw—an enormous Clock, the biggest he had ever imagined! It was the *Town Clock Himself*, and, to the little fellow below, it seemed the size of a house!

At that moment, it evidently became aware of the trembling little thing, who was timidly “tick-ticking” on the roof beneath.

“*Who are you?*” it roared.

“I’m only a little Tick,” came the frightened answer.

The big Clock was angry.

“You are a runaway!” it said sternly, “that is what you are.” And as the Tick confessed that this was so, he commanded him to go home at once.

“Yes Sir, I will obey, Sir,” said he,

timidly, "You see my home Clock was n't wound, Sir, so I just came out for a little walk, Sir. And indeed, Sir, I am quite ready, Sir, to go home, Sir, now, Sir!"

The big Clock, after asking where he lived, gave him careful directions how to reach his home again, and the little Tick went at once!

Down the building he slid, and started on the right way, but after going a few blocks toward his home, he became confused, and forgetting the careful directions which his big friend had given, he took the wrong street, and started off briskly in the wrong direction.

Realizing very soon that he had made a mistake, he jumped onto a nearby fence post, and gazed about, hoping to see some familiar place, but in vain—all was strange. Not knowing what to do next, he sat there in a miserable little heap, sadly muttering,

“ Tick-tick, tick-tick ” (which really meant “ I ’ m lost, I ’ m lost ! ”).

I don’t know when he would have got home—perhaps he would never have got home, if something had n’t happened, something splendid ! For down the street came a man, tall and bearded. This man was whistling gaily, and the tune that he was whistling was—*Yankee Doodle !*

This tune the Clock-tick recognized at once, and when the man approached, to his unbounded joy, he recognized him also. For it was the measles-boy’s Papa, his own dear Clock - Winder ! Nearer and nearer the man came, marching in time to the music. When he was just opposite the post, the Tick jumped quickly, landing softly, and firmly clutching the left coat tail. He knew that in all probability, his master was going directly home, and his plan was to go with him. But he

realized now, that he must be careful to keep out of hearing, if possible, that otherwise unpleasant consequences might follow.

Of course the Tick really belonged to the man, but he feared that he never would be recognized away from the Clock. After all, when Clock-ticks are separated from their Clocks, there are not many people who would know them, no matter how many years they had listened to them.

The man walked on, still whistling the Doodle-Song, and kept on whistling and still whistling, until he had reached his own house, which he did in about ten minutes. Unlocking the door, he stepped into the warm hall, and the Tick scurried across the dimly lighted sitting-room, and into his old home, where, breathing hard, he seated himself on the Pendulum.

Now the Clock, being old and wise, had given directions that when the Tick returned

(as he expected he would) nothing unkind should be said, for he realized that in all probability, the little fellow would have suffered enough already. So not a word of reproof was spoken.

“Is everybody ready now?” inquired the Clock gently.

A soft whirring “y-e-s” rippled through the cogs and things.

“Are we wound?” whispered the Tick, timidly.

“Yes, long ago, our mistress wound us, and started the Pendulum, but we couldn’t go, because——”

“Yes, I see. I—fully understand!” said the guilty Tick. For he knew that no Clock could go without his Tick. He would find himself arrested instantly, if he tried to!

“At first, we thought we would try to go without you,” interrupted the Pendulum,

“but we decided that we ought not to, for you see——”

“Yes, I see,” said the miserable Tick.

“The watch-maker was to come Monday, to repair us,” remarked the escape-wheel. “Now, let us all rejoice that that will not be necessary.”

At this point, the little Tick could bear it no longer, but spoke up bravely, and made his humble apology.

“Dear Friends, it was all my fault, I know!” he cried. “Please forgive me, for I’m very very sorry. I promise *never* to go away again.” And—he never did!

THE BAD-TEMPERED KNIFE

Now listen carefully, for this is a very strange story. Once upon a time, there was an Uncle John and he had a little nephew Elwyn, whose birthday used to come *every* year! Now when Elwyn was eight, Uncle John gave him a knife. It was not a toy-affair, but was made in Germany, and was good and strong, with two sharp blades. Elwyn promised his mother that he would be very "careful" and Uncle John said: "Why, of course he'll be careful. I never should give a knife like that to a careless boy."

Elwyn whittled and cut, and cut and whittled all the morning. After luncheon, he walked down the road and soon met his

friend Gus. It was vacation-time and the two boys had planned to spend the afternoon in the woods, fishing. Elwyn showed his birthday knife to Gus, who admired it greatly, and felt badly that he had no Uncle John—all his uncles were aunts, poor child! Well, pretty soon, the two boys sat down, and began to try the blades.

“Are they very sharp?” asked Gus.

“Oh, yes,” said Elwyn. “See,” and he took from his pocket a piece of white pine, and, placing his knife at one side, began to cut through it. And then—what do you suppose happened? The man who sold the knife to Uncle John did n’t know, of course, or he would never have sold it, and Uncle John certainly did n’t know, or he never would have bought it for his little nephew, of whom he was very fond, but it seems that this knife was not what it appeared to be—for it was an uncommon and

most unpleasant kind. Besides its sharp blades, and strong handle, it had two things practically unknown in knives—a strong will, and an uncontrollable temper!

But perhaps the oddest thing about it was, that it would work only during the morning hours. In the afternoon it liked to sleep, and if any one tried to use it then, it would become so angry that it would *cut*—would actually try to wound its owner, so that it might be left in peace, to finish its nap! Being only a knife, it of course knew no better, but that fact didn't make it any happier for the boy who was cut!

Now, on this particular day Elwyn had been using it, all through the morning, so it was very tired, and had just sunk into a sweet sleep. When it was again opened, and told to cut through the pine, it refused to do it.

“I will not cut anything,” it said crossly,

to the board. But the wood itself was cross-cut, and snapped back:

“You’ve *got* to.”

At this the Knife became furiously angry! Of course Elwyn, hearing nothing of this whispered conversation, never suspected his danger until the terrible thing had occurred—the very worst thing that had ever happened to him, or that could happen to any boy! For the Knife gave a sudden vicious leap upward, and with one long clean stroke—*it cut poor Elwyn’s head off!* But Elwyn (who had never upon any occasion lost his head before) fortunately had the great presence of mind to seize it and put it on again, at once!

The Knife, meanwhile, rather taken aback by the awful thing it had done, had been thrown by the force of the blow right into the stream near, where it immediately sank to the bottom, disappearing forever!

The two boys, meanwhile, both crying bitterly, hurried home. Elwyn's mother took him immediately to the doctor, who was, unfortunately, away on his summer vacation. So a young assistant, who evidently knew very little of modern surgery, fastened on the poor head as well as he could—adding, for safety, an extra snap-hook at the back. Now as soon as the wound was healed Elwyn found, to his surprise, that his head was loose, and moreover, he soon discovered that, by giving a little twisting motion to it, he could remove it, without the least pain, whenever he wished!

At first he didn't tell his mother of this, because he knew it would alarm her, and then he was afraid, too, having known her for several years, that she would forbid him to do it, and he often found it extremely convenient to be able to remove it. For

instance, if he wanted to see what was going on—what the fellows were doing on the other side of the high wall which surrounded his father's house—instead of having to climb over it, or borrow the cook's kitchen-chair, as before, he could now remove his head, lift it up in both hands, look over the wall, and—put it on again. Or, if he wanted to go in swimming, he found it was fine to have a detachable head, for he could first brush his hair carefully, leave his head by the stream with Gus to watch, so that no one would take it, and then swim, plunge, and dive to his heart's content, staying under water for an hour or two, with no danger of losing his breath, getting water in his ears, or any unpleasant thing of that sort. Then when he came out again it was such a comfort to have a nice dry, smiling head to greet him!

One day he caught cold, and the doctor



He could leave his head on the bank, when in swimming, with Gus to watch it.

said he feared it was whooping-cough, as Gus had it, and the two boys had been constantly together. Then Elwyn confessed to his mother that his head was detachable, and suggested to her that she might separate it from his body, and that then neither could whoop. Mamma hated the thought of this, but she hated the whooping-cough still more, so at last she did as he had suggested. The doctor was greatly interested in the novel experiment, and watched the poor head trying hard to whoop, but only able to cough very delicately, as it had no lungs to its back! After this funny attack was over, Elwyn's mother told him never to remove his head again. He promised, and for many months kept his word—then, one day, he *forgot!*

He wanted to climb a tree to get some chestnuts, and, knowing how dizzy it always made him to do this, he removed his head,

placed it on the ground on a comfortable mossy stone, and sent up his body. Now, unfortunately, the body, not being able to see, after going up quite a distance, missed its footing, fell heavily, and lay motionless on the ground!

Elwyn, who was quite alone, called loudly to it, but there it lay! At last, it began to move a little, and again the boy called to it. But of course the poor thing couldn't hear, and simply lay there, groping wildly for its lost head! Elwyn screamed loudly for help, and at last his little dog Schatz dashed through the wood, ran to him, and licked his poor defenceless face—then stood off, and barked severely, first at the body, then at the head. It made Elwyn horribly nervous, to have his body lying so far away, and to see the arms groping for the head! He tried in vain to find some way out of his difficulty. Then suddenly some-

thing still more startling occurred, for, if you 'll believe me, the body began to *walk*! But being so utterly stupid, with no head to think for it, it did n't even know that to do this properly, one must first stand upright! Instead of which, it remained lying just as it was, flat on its back. Of course, as its legs began to move forward, the body was obliged to follow, and as there was no land for it to walk on, it walked straight up *into the air*! It had no brains, of course, and so never suspected what a silly thing it was doing. *How* it could do it, no one knows. We have all of us heard of people "treading on air" and it was probably something of this kind. Up and up it went anyway, Elwyn shouting to it in agony, to "come back! come back!" But in vain, for on it slowly plodded, still groping instinctively for its lost head.

Schatz thought this must be some fine

new game, and barked ecstatically, while gazing upward at the now fast-disappearing body.

At this moment, fortunately, Gus appeared, and was of course horrified at what had occurred. He carried his friend's head home to the poor mother, who burst into tears when she saw all that remained of her little son!

"Your poor body *gone*? Oh, Elwyn!" she sobbed (and indeed it was a sad affliction for a mother). "What will become of you? And—what will become of your body?" she added, "'way up in the air, all alone? Only a balloon can save you now, dear child." At the word "balloon," however, the mother's face suddenly became radiant—an idea had come to her!

"Prof. Latourville!" she cried. "He will save us, if any one can!" It was indeed a happy thought, for this rich, kind neigh-

bor was the owner of a wonderful air-ship! Hastening to him, they laid the case (and Elwyn's head) before him. Enthusiastically did he agree to help, and the man Jean (his air-feur) soon brought the huge balloon to the door. The mother was helped carefully aboard, holding in a basket all that remained of poor Elwyn. Then the Professor, Gus, and Schatz jumped in, the word was given, and they started.

"We can give you no idea, alas! which way he went," said the distracted mother. "Only that it was *way up*."

"That is of no need, Madame," the Professor assured her, courteously. "There is but one way the body *could* have taken—but one for us. That is, the 'air-line.' By that the body must have gone—by that *we* go!"

For about an hour they journeyed on silently, Elwyn's mother occasionally wiping the big tears from his poor eyes.

Suddenly there came a shrill bark from Schatz—the Professor gave a look through his powerful glasses, then—

“It is he, *grace à Dieu!* I perceive him!” he cried.

A moment more, and all could see Elwyn’s poor tired body resting comfortably on a soft, white cloud. Cautiously, the balloon was steered to it. A quick motion, and the Professor seized its arm and drew it into the balloon! In an instant the head was again attached to the body, amid great excitement and rejoicing.

“My son, my own dear son!” said the mother, tenderly, “this must never, never happen again.”

“Indeed it never shall,” sobbed the boy.

But, as soon as they landed, the mother took her son at once to a Boston surgeon (a celebrated neck-ologist), who laughed at the bungling work of the young country

doctor. With marvellous skill, he fastened Elwyn's head permanently to his body, so there was absolutely no possibility of its ever coming off again, under any circumstances, and—*it never did!*

THE NAUGHTINESS OF NUMBER NINE

IN the little old town of Spitzbergbadensteinheim, in northern Germany, stood an ivy-covered stone tower, and in it there was a wonderful clock. Proud were the Spitzbergbadensteinheimers of their beautiful town, prouder of its stone tower, built no one knew when, but proudest were they of their unusually wonderful and wonderfully unusual *town-clock*!

This clock one might look at, at any hour, and find nothing remarkable about it, in fact he might continue to look for eleven hours and a half, and still find it as others,

but at the twelfth—then indeed it showed what was really *in* it!

At that time, all the strangers in the village, and all the village people themselves, gathered in the big markt-platz, or square, and gazed up expectantly at the clock. As it began to strike twelve, a small door at the right opened slowly, and out walked twelve little men—the hours—in stately procession! Each was a foot high and made of wood, and although they walked somewhat jerkily, yet, considering that they had no knee-joints, they did remarkably well.

“Ach, wunderbar! Wunderschön!” said everybody, but the little men, used to this fervent admiration, walked stiff-ly, slow-ly, on, and, passing in front of the dial, entered their house again, by a second little door at the left, the last one disappearing just as the clock, which had been solemnly “striking,”

ing, strik-ing" all the time, said "*twelve.*" (It was not always twelve by any means, when the clock said so, but as it did say so, and had twelve people at its back, no Spitzbergbadensteinheimer had ever been bold enough to contradict it!)

Now, one hot day in August, at half-past eleven (half an hour before it was time for the procession to move) there was great excitement in the little room behind the clock. A discussion was going on, and this was what it was about. It seems that, after having walked dutifully and unquestioningly in that solemn procession for so many years, one of the little men, Number Nine, had *rebelled!*

"I want to know, my brothers, what we gain by walking round there each day?" he grumbled.

"We are doing our duty," said one, "and that is our reward."

“*Ugh!*” said the little rebel, contemptuously. “A pretty poor reward for leading such a stupid life. Do we ever run? No. Do we skip and jump merrily? Indeed we do not. Do we ever even reverse, and go the other way? Never—never. Just round and round day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year. Oh, ’t is horrible!”

“And do you not know, Number Nine,” said one of his shocked companions, “that by leading this simple life we have won the love of everybody? Is it nothing to you to feel that the people look up to us with respect and admiration?”

“No,” said the rebellious little man, crossly, “it is n’t. I don’t want to be looked up to. I want to be down among the people, and I’ll be there, too,” he muttered, “and that before the hour has struck.”

Never had anything of this sort happened! The others were scandalized, and looked askance at the flushed face of Number Nine.

"What makes him so cross-grained and naughty?" whispered one.

"Well," said his neighbor, "I am not surprised, for I happen to know that he is made out of a piece of cross-grained knotty wood! I saw this myself. They made me before they did him, you know, and as I lay there, freshly painted, my bright new eyes saw many things. I certainly feel sorry for Number Nine."

"So do I," agreed the other. "What you have said explains much. Poor fellow, he is more to be pitied than blamed."

But there was now no time for further talk, as the tower-clock pointed to one minute before twelve. The loyal village people had gathered as usual in the market-

place to see the procession. The Burgo-master's watch said that it was a quarter before twelve, but that was a secret which the worthy man kept strictly to himself.



The ninth suddenly stopped, and fell down to the ground.

The usual preliminary *whirring* sound was now heard—the little door at the right opened s-l-o-w-l-y, the clock said: “*One*” and the procession appeared. Out and

around in front of the dial came the first, second, and third little figure, followed by the fourth, fifth, and sixth, each moving with his usual stately jerk. Next came the seventh and eighth, and then—the *ninth*! But he, the rebellious one, suddenly stopped—stopped short, swayed frightfully from side to side, gave a wild jump out into the air, and then—down, down to the ground he shot, falling heavily, with a sickening, splintering *crash*!

Eleven piercing shrieks of terror came from his brothers, but the sound was quite lost in the noise of the crowd below, which gathered about the poor little injured creature, who lay, with outstretched arms, quite still upon the stone pavement. He had fainted—but no one knew it (few people realize how sensitive these small wooden men are). But they picked him up tenderly, and carried him to a man in the village

who made wooden toys. On examination, it was found that the poor little fellow's arm was broken, and both legs completely shattered — fearful quadruple - impacted - lateral fractures !

He suffered greatly, and as he lay there, glued and bandaged, he regretted bitterly ever having left his comfortable home in the clock-tower. When he was mended, the town clock-maker carried him to the tower again, and put him back in his place. But there proved to be a sad difficulty—for he did not quite “fit.” Either his new legs were too big for the place, or perhaps the place was too big for the legs ; anyway he certainly did not seem to stand firmly. So, to prevent his falling again, the man tied a strong string about his waist, and fastened one end to the figure in front, the other to the one behind !

It was, as you may imagine, a terrible

mortification to a person of his age and high position, not to be permitted to stand alone, but to be put once more in "leading-strings." But, sad as it was, he was forced to appear thus in public, every day as long as he lived!

If you ever go to Spitzbergbadensteinheim, you can see him yourself (Number Nine, remember).

YARG

“MAMMA,” said Charlotte, “may I walk up Grayrock Mountain, with Aunt Amy?”

“Well, dearie,” answered Mamma, “is n’t this a misty day for Grayrock? There will be no view there.”

“That’s the very reason we want to go!” explained Charlotte, “everybody climbs the mountain on clear days, and Aunt Amy and I thought we’d like to go when it’s misty and queer, so we can see the view when there is n’t any!”

“Very well,” said Mamma smiling, “but there must be rubbers and the thick red sweater.”

Aunt Amy was willing to go—she was that kind of an aunt—and getting her paint

brushes, folding easel, and so on, she was soon ready. This was the only fault dear Aunt Amy had—on the very nicest tramps she always insisted on taking her perfectly tiresome, smelly paint-things !

The two soon came to the path which led to Grayrock, for the quiet village lay curled at the foot of the big mountain. The path itself was narrow, steep, and seldom used. But Charlotte and Aunt Amy loved the old hill, and often climbed there on summer afternoons, and had dreadfully gay picnic teas at the summit !

On this chilly day, however, Aunt Amy was not quite as enthusiastic as usual, and before reaching the top she spread her shawl, opened her box, and began to paint !

“Oh, Auntie, please come on !” begged Charlotte. “Let us see how the view looks when there is n’t any.”

“Go yourself, dear,” said her aunt dreamily; “it is n’t far, you know, and this fascinating silver-birch has simply got to have its picture painted.”

When Aunt Amy spoke in that far-away voice, it was useless to tease or argue, so Charlotte went on alone.

It was quite a stiff climb, but at last she saw the big rock which gave the hill its name, towering ghost-like above. The day had grown cool, and the little girl buttoned her gray jacket, glad now that under it was the thick red sweater.

Calling back, she heard Aunt Amy’s answering hail, sounding far away and muffled, through the thick fog. Charlotte looked about timidly, for things had a strange, eerie appearance. Where the view usually lay, there was a soft sea of gray, and wisps of fog were floating lazily about, now lifting a bit, now hiding all. The trees, too, were

talking mysteriously to each other, and the big rock looked very tall and solemn.

“Ten times as big as usual, I should think,” whispered Charlotte, “but, just the same, I’m going up to its top. I’m not whispering ’cos I’m afraid,” she added, “but ’cos somehow it does n’t seem to be a loud-talking day, up here.”

On climbed the little girl. When almost at the top, she happened to glance at the sharply pointed rock before her, and—stopped short, greatly startled! For, as she looked, the top of the rock—if you can believe me—apparently *moved*!

This was certainly amazing, and at first the little girl supposed she must have been mistaken—that what she had seen was a bit of drifting fog, but while she was still gazing, it *moved again*!

“Nonsense,” she said sharply to herself, “you know perfectly well, Charlotte, that a

rock *can't* move, even if it wanted to, awfully! It must have been a little rabbit that was sitting there, or p'raps a cat. I'm going up to see, anyway," and she hurried to the top, for she was a fearless little creature, and always liked to find out about things. But when she got there, what do you suppose she found? Sitting calmly upon the rock, just as if he belonged there, and had always been there, was a wee, gray-clad man! He wore a high pointed cap; his whiskers were long and white, and in height he was certainly not over twelve inches! Charlotte was sure she must be dreaming, and stood quite still, staring silently at the little gray person, fully expecting him to sail away and disappear. Suddenly, he turned his head and gave a perfectly awful jump, for he was quite as much surprised to see her as she was to see him.

"Well, well, well," he cried in a wee

squeaky voice, "who are you, Big-girl, and where do you come from?"

"I'm Charlotte, and I came from the village," she answered. "And please—who are you?"

"I'm myself, always," said the wee man, "and I came from my home down below. I have a home at home, you know. My name is Yarg—beautiful name, is n't it?"

"It does n't sound very beautiful to me," stammered truthful little Charlotte. "Where is your home-at-home, sir?"

"Oh, in the rock, over there," and Yarg pointed to the right.

"But, why have n't we seen each other before, I wonder?" continued Charlotte. "I've been here a great many times, and I never saw you,—I did n't even know you lived here."

"Geeroshkins, no!" said Yarg, "I should say you did n't, Girl. Few people do. I

never saw you, either. In fact, although I have heard people talking in the distance, you are the first one I ever spoke to. Large, are n't you, poor thing? And very unpleasant-looking, too!"

Charlotte, who was really a pretty little girl, was quite offended at this speech, but finding that the small man was looking kindly at her, and that he had no idea of being rude, she laughed, instead.

"Oh my!" said he, putting his hands to his ears, "what was that hateful noise you made—what were you doing?"

"I was laughing," answered Charlotte, greatly amused.

"Well, please don't do it again. I dislike it very much." The little girl promised to be careful, but asked if she might smile.

"Certainly, if you'll do it quietly," said Yarg. (He really had no idea what a 'smile' was, but didn't like to confess it.)

"Now tell me, Girl," he continued after staring steadily at Charlotte for a moment, "tell me, what are those horrid yellow snakes hanging from your head?"

"They are n't snakes, they are curls," she answered indignantly.

"Awful, are n't they? I s'pose you can't get rid of them?" and Yarg shook his head at her, sympathetically.

At this the little girl was quite hurt.

"I don't want to get rid of them. My family like them very much," she said. "But, Yarg, why is it that no one has ever seen you, I wonder?"

"Don't wonder. Sit down, and I'll tell you," said the small man. "You see, people walk here on pleasant days, while I never come up, on that kind of a day. In fact, I appear only on my birthday, any way, and not then, unless it be a soft gray one, like this."

"Oh, is this your birthday, Yarg?"

"Yes, 't is, Girl, and my next one will be in five years and five fifths from now—the one after that, in six years and six sixths, and so on—and on."

Charlotte stared. "But how can you keep count, and know just how old you are?"

"I don't—so I'm never old! Here Yarg beckoned mysteriously to the child, and as she approached, whispered: "As you really wish to know, I'll tell you (in confidence), I'm about as old as *the top of this hill!* But please don't mention it to people."

"I won't," said Charlotte earnestly, but she added: "I think that your way of having a birthday is a terribly funny way. Now mine comes once a year regularly, and always in the autumn."

"Tiresome arrangement, that," remarked

Yarg, drily. "Mine drops in almost any time, sometimes in autumn, sometimes in winter or summer."

"Yes, but, Yarg, how do you know when you are going to have one?" persisted Charlotte, anxiously.

"Oh, I feel it coming on. One has then an unmistakable older-iferous feeling, you know. When the birthday finally gets here, if the day happens to be a soft gray one, I scramble up and sit on this rock-point. Then, if a gray-clad person like yourself chances to come walking along, why, of course, in that case—here we both are! But she must be strictly gray-clad, you know, from top to toe. Bright-colored clothes I cannot endure. They make me deadly ill! In fact" (here Yarg became excited, and, rising to his feet, screamed out,) "in fact, whenever I see bright colors, I always *run*—run like mad!"

"Oh, I am so glad, then, that I wore my gray suit to-day," cried the little girl. "Just suppose it had been my very-bright-blue dress?"

"Don't let us speak or even think of anything so dreadfully terribly awful, as that!" and the wee man shuddered, while Charlotte, suddenly remembering her scarlet sweater, drew her jacket carefully round her neck, so that no hint of it should appear. "Will you please tell me," she continued, eager to change the subject, "just how you came up here? But perhaps it's a secret, and you'd rather not?"

"It's no secret. I came through the hole," answered Yarg, gathering his filmy garments about him and smiling at her.

"What hole?"

"'What hole?' That's an odd question, Girl. Through my own, of course."

"But where is it?" inquired Charlotte, eagerly.

"Hanging on the tree over there," said the wee man, carelessly. "It's a loop-hole, so I hung it up by its loop."

"Oh, how very interesting!" cried little Charlotte, springing to her feet. "Can't I see it, please? I never saw a hung-up hole in my life!"

"Don't *roar!*" begged Yarg, nervously, covering his ears with his tiny hands. "Speak gently. As to seeing the hole, that's impossible, Big-Girl. Holes are meant to be gone through. They can't be seen."

"Some can," said Charlotte, earnestly, "for I have often seen big ones in my own stockings, and I didn't try to go through them, either."

"Well," and Yarg yawned, "anyway, if you hadn't gone through your stockings

first, there never would have been any holes to see.”

Charlotte was somewhat confused at this reasoning, but admitted that what he said was true, adding timidly:

“I hope, sir, that I can go into your house some time, for I’d like to see it very much.”

“And I’d like to have you see it, very much. Why not come now?” And here the wee man rose, and bowed with extreme politeness.

Charlotte bowed too, and accepted the invitation.

Yarg slipped down from his rocky seat, hurried to a big maple-tree near, from the hanging branches of which he took an invisible something, which he spread deftly over the rock.

“Now turn your back,” he whispered, “new-laid holes are nervous—hate to be

watched. 'A watched hole dreads the child,' you know."

Charlotte did n't know, but turned her back obediently.

When the two looked again, the very accommodating hole had stretched itself out, until it made a fine large opening, which led straight into the rock!

"Take my hand," said Charlotte.

"*No, no, no!* Don't touch me!" screamed Yarg in sudden terror.

"Why, what is the matter? What would happen if I touched you?" inquired the little girl, surprised at his excitement.

"Something serious would happen — something too dreadful. It is the law. *Don't do it!* That 's all," was the cross answer.

Now Charlotte did n't like this tone at all, and, having been told that something might happen, she was burning with

curiosity to know what that something was.

“He is n’t Papa nor Mamma, nor aunts nor uncles,” she reflected, “so I don’t have to obey him. I want very much to find out what would happen. I know it’s rude, to do what he asked me not to, but, O. dear, I feel that I’m going to be rude, and do it. But I’ll be careful—and just touch him a very wee little!”

So when Yarg turned his back, Charlotte, after a moment’s hesitation, put out her right hand slowly, and timidly touched him with the very tips of her five naughty little fingers!

Instantly the wee man whirled, and looking reproachfully at her, burst into tears, while Charlotte gazed at him, conscience-stricken. At that moment a soft “whirring” was heard, and from all sides came the sound of shrill, elfish laughter:

“*Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!*”

Much surprised, the little girl looked about, and then started back in complete bewilderment, for there, hopping about in a circle, and giggling shrilly, were *five new little Imps!* Each was exactly like Yarg in appearance—pointed cap, white whiskers, and all, the only difference being that he wore a silver chain, was roly-poly, and well-fed, while these little creatures were thinner than thin wisps. They were weird-looking and elusive, too, and Charlotte fancied that she could see right through them!

“Are they really real?” she asked herself, conscience-stricken.

“Now see what you have done, Big-Girl!” sobbed the wee man. “Why, oh, why, did you touch me?”

“Indeed, I am very s-sorry, I did,” stammered poor Charlotte.

“I warned you,” moaned Yarg, “and goodness ter gracious ter sakes alive, why did n’t you obey? Instead, you allowed five of your world-fingers to touch me, and the minute that happened, of course five more of me appeared—one for each finger!”

“*Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!*” shrieked the Imps mockingly, each in a different key.

Charlotte examined her fingers with a new interest.

“Now, how in the world could they have done this thing?” she asked herself. “They never did anything of the sort before. They are n’t magic, but just plain common fingers.”

“Of course they are common,” said Yarg rudely, “just as common as they can be, but—they touched ME—and I am very uncommon! Anyway, it has happened, and it is the law.”

“Why is it the law?” demanded Charlotte.

“There is never any ‘why’ about the law. It simply *is*.” Here Yarg began once more to weep dismally, while the five Sprites bounded about, and cackled with delight. Charlotte shook her head at them and frowned, but they only made frightful faces and stuck out their tongues, saucily!

“Horrid little things, I don’t believe they’re really real, at all,” said Charlotte, at last. “Can’t we get rid of them, Yarg? Throw them over the cliff, or something of that sort?”

Now Charlotte was a very kind-hearted child, and she had never killed anything in her life. These tiny weird creatures, however, in their floating cobwebby garments, didn’t appear to be truly alive, and it seemed quite a natural way of disposing of them!

But Yarg only shook his head sadly, and said: "I wish we could get rid of them in such an easy way as that, but 't is impossible. If you threw them over the cliff, they would simply rebound and return at once. They would n't fall down, for they will not obey any law, even the law of gravitation. Throw one of them over, and you 'll see for yourself what happens."

Little Charlotte did n't understand all this speech, but, having received Yarg's permission, she seized one of the Imps and with all her strength threw it over the rocks!

The buoyant little creature laughed gleefully, and, clinging to a wisp of mist, stood for a second gracefully upright on it, and then half bounded, half flew, back to his companions, who welcomed him with piercing shrieks of triumph.

"There, you see how 't is!" remarked

the King, sadly. "One cannot get rid of them,—they are indestructible."

Charlotte's heart sank, as she realized the mischief which her curiosity had caused. Yarg, seeing this, said kindly, "Do you still think you'd like to come with me, Big-Girl, and have a look at my home?"

The little girl nodded eagerly, and followed him, the five uninvited others shuffling and clattering along, too, giggling foolishly at every step. At first, the party passed through the hole and walked along a dark passage, into the rock. It soon became light, however, and they found themselves in a big bare hall. A stone fireplace was at one end; before it, a beautiful silver-gray-fox rug.

Yarg led Charlotte to an opening at one side. "That is my sleeping-room," he announced proudly.

They all peered in, and there by the wee

bed stood a tiny gray-clad woman, deftly smoothing up cobwebby sheets and blankets.

"I like a good wide bed, you see," said Yarg.

"*I* don't. I want mine narrow," squealed one of the Imps.

"Give me four blankets," cried the second.

"One for me,—but have it thick," snarled number three.

"I want two hair-pillows."

"Pillows? I hate 'em!" shouted the last.

The little gray woman looked out, despairingly.

"Alas, Master, must I work for them all?" she inquired in a low voice, and as the King nodded sadly, she fell fainting to the floor!

After she had recovered, the others walked on, until they reached a second opening in the wall.

"My laundry," said Yarg. And there

stood another little woman hanging out cunning gray silk shirts, and wee socks, on a line which stretched from side to side.

"I have silk underwear, you see," volunteered the King.

"So do I," said the first Imp.

"Woollen for me," shouted the second.

"Mine are linen—fine unbleached linen," and number three scowled.

"No, no," squealed the fourth, excitedly, "flannel always, always flannel."

"Grrrrrr!" said the fifth and last, "I don't wear—any!"

"Must I wash for them?" inquired the laundress anxiously, as the hubbub died away, and when the King nodded, she, like the chamber-maid, fainted. Soon the procession went on, the Imps quarrelling or giggling foolishly among themselves.

Charlotte guessed that they must be nearing the kitchen, for a delicious smell greeted

them. In this room, they found a small and very fierce-looking man-cook who was preparing dinner, before a cunning stove, and using the wee-est and most fascinating dishes that ever were seen!

"I have a fine cook," whispered Yarg, "and he gives me very fine dinners—soup, fish, meat, and vegetables (in and out of season), and a nice dessert—always something that I can really eat!"

"*My* dinners must be served twice each day!" said the first Imp.

"I want two kinds o' soup!" snarled the second.

"One soup for me," howled the third, "but two desserts."

"Afternoon tea with pink frosted muffins!" said the next.

"I want choc'late ice-cream for breakfast," snapped the last, shaking his fists, excitedly.

The little Cook glanced fiercely at each one, in turn.

“See here, Master, must I cook for those idiots?” he asked.

The King seemed a bit anxious. “Well, you know,” he said timidly, “the law is quite firm upon that point.”

“*Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!*” shouted the five Sprites, in shrill chorus.

But the little Cook-man did n’t faint—not he!

Instead, he approached, bearing in his hand a long sharp knife, scowling morosely as he came, and gnashing his sharp teeth ogre-ifically!

“Get out of me kitchen, one and all,” he shouted. “Go, before I murder ye dead!”

“He means it—he never exaggerates,” cried Yarg nervously. “*Run, everybody run!*”

And everybody did run, including

Charlotte! They hurried and they scurried, and they scooted and they scampered, out of the kitchen, across the hall, through the long entrance passage and out into the air, before they dared to stop a bit!



"Run, everybody run!" cried Yarg.

Yarg and Charlotte looked silently at each other, for a moment.

"What an escape!" said she.

"Yes, and it is most fortunate that the hole happened to be a loop-one," said the King, "one can escape twice as well through a loop-hole, you know."

Meanwhile, the five Imps began to scream and quarrel among themselves.

“Oh, Yarg, are n’t they perfectly awful? Is n’t there some way in which we can get rid of them?” asked Charlotte.

“There is, but—it is an impossible one,” and the wee man sighed.

“And what is the way? How could it be done?”

“Well, my dear, the law says, if any one could get the Five to stop quarrelling and to agree about anything, that is, to agree sufficiently so that they would all say the *same thing at the same time*, they would then be obliged to leave the earth—to disappear. That, however, is an utter impossibility. It can’t be done—just look at them now!”

Charlotte did so, and indeed what the wee man had suggested did seem an impossibility, for the horrid little things were standing in a circle, brandishing their fists

at each other and shouting, "No! Yes! 'Tis! 'Tain't! You're another!" at the top of their lungs.

Charlotte closed her eyes for a moment and thought deeply, for she was a quick-minded child.

Suddenly an idea came to her!

"May I speak to them?" she asked the little King. He nodded.

Charlotte then called them aside, one by one, whispered something to each in turn, and after she had done so, it would be hard to find five happier-looking Imps!

"You have heard what I said, and you understand. Now stand in a row," she commanded.

They obeyed, and, as they stood there quietly, the little girl said to them: "Friends, I am going to ask you a very-extremely-important question, and I want you all to answer it, truthfully. Yarg is your king—

he wears the silver chain. Now, tell me—*Who do you think would make a better king than he?*” And in answer to this question five shrill voices shouted enthusiastically, and *all together*, “*I!*”

But no sooner had the shout died away than there came five little “puff! puff! puff! puff! puffs!” and five little nothings stood where the Imps had just been! The law had been fulfilled. When Yarg found what had happened—that he had been really freed—he shouted for joy, and so did Charlotte.

“Was n’t it a great idea?” she cried, and she danced up and down till she grew red in the face.

“I am perfectly roasting,” she cried, “I must take off my jacket and get cool.” Unbuttoning it, she quickly threw it down, quite forgetting, alas! that underneath—was the *piercingly-bright red sweater!*

The poor little King gave one agonized look at it, and then, with a pitiful cry, flew to the rock, and jumped headlong into the hole.

“Oh, Yarg, dear Yarg, come back! I quite forgot!” shouted poor Charlotte, hastily putting on her gray jacket again, and buttoning it to the very throat!

But the appeal was in vain, the King did not return.

Hurrying to the rock, Charlotte examined it carefully. There was nothing to be seen, for tidy little Yarg had gathered up the hole and taken it with him, when he went through! So, although poor Charlotte knocked and called for a long time, the rock remained as before!

As it was now beginning to grow dark, the little girl reluctantly left, and walked slowly down the mountain. When she came to Aunt Amy, she found that the

picture had been painted, and that the paints were being put away.

But wasn't it a shameful shame, that Charlotte wore the piercingly-bright crimson sweater?

THE WALKING BOY

IN the summer, Albert spent two weeks in the country with his father and mother, and during that time he never wore shoes. He trotted about in his little bare feet, just as all the country boys did, and was therefore as cool as a cucumber, and much happier.

One day he went out for a walk up toward "Mount Mystery," and through some beautiful woods.

Pretty soon he met a strange boy, somewhat older than himself, who was walking round and round in a big circle, as fast as he could go! He was a pleasant-looking lad, but his face was white and drawn, and he seemed to be in an exhausted condition.

"Where are you going?" asked Albert.

"Nowhere," answered Joe (for that was his name).

"Then—why do you go there so fast?"

"Because I must," said the Walking Boy, sadly, "*I cannot stop!* And if you want to talk to me, you will have to come, too."

Albert trotted along by the boy's side, wondering what it all meant.

"I am unable to stop, even for a moment," explained Joe, "and the reason is this: I have on my feet some walking-boots, not the common kind, you understand, but some *real walking-boots!* It was two years ago this month that I first put them on, and since then I have been walking, walking steadily, with never a moment's rest! I suppose they are magic boots—I do not know!" and the poor boy's voice broke!

"How perfectly awful!" cried Albert, horrified.

"Awful indeed," said the other, "for I cannot even stop long enough to take them off, but, in spite of fatigue, must keep on walk-walk-walking, night and day! I snatch blueberries and blackberries from the bushes, as I pass, and thus keep myself alive, but one tires of a constant fruit diet, and I feel miserable and ill, most of the time."

"I should think you would," said Albert, sympathetically. "And is there nothing that will help you—that will make these magic boots *stop*?"

"No, nothing," answered Joe, sadly; "that is, there is one thing that might help, I suppose, but it is out of the question, for it is well-nigh impossible to get."

"What is this wonderful thing?"

"I will tell you about it," began Joe, solemnly. "Many years ago, there lived

not far from here a Mrs. Scrugg, a farmer's wife, who was insane. One winter, she made a braided rug, and she put in the colors in such a ghastly way that, without exception, every one who looked upon it fainted immediately! It was called 'the fainting-rug,' in fact."

"My, it must have been a peach!" interrupted Albert.

"I suppose it was. Soon after she had finished it, the poor woman died. But 't is said that the rug is still owned by the family. Now, if some one—some kind person—were to bring this mat here, and lay it in my path, I should faint at once, and so stop walking. No one could keep on walking while lying on the ground in a dead faint, you know."

"And while you were busy fainting, *I* could take off your boots, couldn't I?" asked Albert.

“That’s the idea exactly.”

“And a mighty good one, too! I’ll go to the Scruggs’ at once, Joe. Where do they live?”

“Up the road, in a little red hut, under a wide-boughed ash-tree. They are always there between three and four in the afternoon. But, Albert, it is not an easy matter to get the rug, they say. There are many difficulties. Have you the time and patience to overcome them?” and Joe sighed dreadfully.

“I will go there to-morrow, and I’ll try,” answered Albert, heartily.

The next afternoon, bright and early, he returned, thoughtfully bringing a basket of food for the poor hungry Walking Boy.

“Keep up your heart, Joe. I’ll soon bring you the fainting-rug,” he shouted cheerily.

"I hope so," responded Joe in a muffled voice,—which was perhaps not to be wondered at, as he was trying to eat two big doughnuts, at the same moment! "But see here, Albert," he proceeded, "before you go, tell me one thing,—are you a poet? Can you make verses?"

"*Verses?* No, I can't," admitted Albert, in astonishment.

"Then take this," and the Walking Boy held out a small bottle, containing four white pellets. "These are Poetical Pills," he explained, "and before asking for the rug, take one. Mr. Scrugg used to be extremely fond of poetry, I remember."

"But I don't understand," interrupted Albert, "how a simple little pill can make a poet out of me?"

"Oh, it takes but little to make a poet!" responded the other calmly. "Now farewell, and good luck to you."

Albert marched away, full of courage, and, after a hard walk of twenty minutes or so, came to the little red hut, under the wide-boughed ash-tree just as Joe had described it.

Going to its one door, he knocked timidly. No answer. Then he opened the door, looked in, and saw lying on the floor a man—fast asleep. “’Tis probably Mr. Scrugg,” thought the little boy.

“Sir,” he began—then, suddenly remembering what Joe had said, he took out the small bottle marked “Poetical Pills” and swallowed one.

No sooner had he done so than the charm began to work. He opened his lips and, bowing to the sleeping man, said sweetly:

“ Oh, sleeping Scrugg,
Your fainting-rug
I ’d like (yes like),
To borrow.

“The pretty thing
I’ll surely bring
Right back (yes back),
To-morrow.”

But, alas! even poetry like this, seemed to have no effect upon the sleeping man, who simply continued to sleep.

Albert stepped into the hut and shook him gently, but it was of no use. Just then, a little girl entered the room.

“O dear!” she cried, “who are you, boy? I am Dorothy, and I am indeed glad to see you. There has been no one here for a year!”

Albert told her who he was, explained his errand, and the little girl said:

“O dear! I wish I could lend the rug to you, but I can’t, and I’ll tell you why: My poor mother died three years ago, and since then father and I have done the cooking and all the work. One night, by mis-

take, he put some poppy-seed into his tea. After he drank it he at once fell asleep, just as you see him, and unfortunately he happened to lie down directly on the famous *fainting-rug!*” Taking Albert’s hand, the little girl led him to the sleeping old man, who lay, as she had said, stretched at full length in the very middle of the precious rug!

“I cannot rouse him,” said Dorothy, “cannot even turn him over, because his poor hair and beard have now grown into the rug itself. O dear!” here the little daughter pointed sadly, and Albert saw that what she had said was true, for the unfortunate man’s long hair had twisted, and twined, and woven itself right into the rug, while his enormously long beard was all tangled up in it, also! At this point, Dorothy began to weep softly. Albert felt very badly.

"Is there nothing that will help your father?" he asked sympathetically.

"Nothing," answered the child, "that is, unless we could get a drop of the essence of esnesnon, and put it in his mouth. They tell me if *that* were done, he would wake up, but, of course, the esnesnon is a very hard thing to find, and there is no one to get it for us."

"Where is it?" asked Albert, all interest.

"Oh, it is up there," said Dorothy, pointing. "It gushes out from the big white rock every ten minutes, between three and four in the afternoon. It belongs to the horrible Croco-Snake, you know, and he eats it and likes it."

"Won't he give you some?"

"No, he's terribly selfish, and refuses to give even a drop to anybody."

"Have you ever seen him?"

"No, indeed, I would n't dare to even look at him," and the little girl shuddered.

"Every one is afraid of the Croco-Snake, you know. He's perfectly awful. Part of him is crocodile, and part is snake!"

"Where does he live?"

"Near the very tall birch-tree, a mile up the path," said the child. "O dear! I wish you were a brave enough boy to get the esnesnon for us; it would be so pleasant to have a father again!"

"Well," said Albert, slowly, "I am not a bit braver than other boys, but I am going to try to get the stuff for you, anyway. As it is now after four o'clock, however, I'll have to wait until to-morrow."

Running down the path, he stopped to tell Joe what had happened, and then hurried home.

The next afternoon, Albert left his house

at two, and at quarter before three he reached Joe.

“All right?” he inquired.

“Yes, except that day by day I grow weaker,” answered Joe, “but never mind that. Go along, and remember before you speak to the Croco-Snake, to take one of the Poetical Pills. It is a great protection.”

Albert reached the little red hut in half an hour, and at the door stood the Scrugg child.

“Still asleep?” he asked.

“Still asleep,” she answered sadly.

On trudged the boy, and in ten minutes came to a very tall birch-tree. Underneath, at the left, was the white stone, with a small, perfectly round opening in the middle. Over this opening was roughly cut the word

“ESNESNON!”

Albert went round the rock and looked at the word from the other side, finding to his

amazement that from there the letters were twisted backward!

“That is certainly a queer thing,” said the boy. “When I look at the word from the left it spells ‘Esnesnon,’ but when I look at it from the right side, it is

‘NONSENSE!’”

“*It is! It is! It is!*” said a saucy bird.

Albert paid no attention to this impertinence, but began to examine carefully the opening in the rock. “That is evidently the hole out of which the famous essence spurts,” said he.

“You are right,” said a horrible voice, at his side. “It is the hole, young man, but—*grrrrr!* every drop of the essence gushes for me—and for me only!”

Albert, much frightened, looked about, but saw nothing. The voice was dreadful, however, having a repulsive, slimy-scaly sound, half crocodile, half snake!

At that moment, from the hole in the white stone, there came an odd choking "*glugity glug!*" and a bright pink liquid gushed from it. The Croco-Snake jumped nimbly, just in time to catch it in his big mouth!

When Albert really saw the beast, he was so frightened that he almost fell down! The monster was at least seven or eight feet long, with a greenish-brown scaly body, vicious green eyes, and a broad flat head which was fastened to its body by an unnaturally thin neck. It seemed to be in a very bad humor, too, and was gnashing its teeth and frowning furiously! Albert summoned up his courage, however, and was about to speak, when he remembered, just in time, that he must first take a Poetical Pill! So, hurriedly popping one into his mouth, he bowed gracefully to the creature, and said:

“I’d like, dear Sir, some essence,
The essence which you keep;
One little drop in old Scrugg’s mouth
Will end his lengthy sleep.”

At these musical words, the Croco-Snake stopped gnashing his teeth, the furious frown left his gnarled forehead, and a cosy, comfortable purring sound came from his thick lips, which widened slowly into a friendly smile.

“Boy, kindly repeat those beautiful words,” said he, “I just dote on poetry.”

Albert repeated the little verse, with much fire and expression, and the Croco-Snake stretched himself luxuriously, and purred more loudly yet. But he said nothing in answer, and Albert, after waiting for a few moments, in vain, ventured at last to ask timidly if he could spare a drop of the wonderful essence.

“No,” said the creature, “I can’t. There



“Boy,” said the Croco-Snake, “I just dote on poetry.”

is not much of it, anyway, and what there is, I need for my own use."

"Oh," said the poor boy, "I am so disappointed. Perhaps you would be willing to sell me a drop?" and he held out twenty-five cents.

"*Ugh*," snapped the creature.

"Well," persisted Albert, who, having gone thus far, was determined not to give the matter up, "is there nothing you want, Sir, nothing I can get for you, in exchange for just one little drop of the esnesnon?"

"I want nothing—nothing at all," said the Croco-Snake, crossly, and, to Albert's dismay, he turned and crawled away! He had gone but a few feet, however, when he stopped and said slowly: "Of course, Boy, if any one should offer me the collar, the collar-set-with-emeraloons, you understand, well—then, I dare say, I might be

induced to part with a drop—just *one* drop—of the essence.”

“Where is the collar?” asked Albert, eagerly.

“At present it is round the neck of a horrid little black-and-white animal. Would n’t it look perfectly lovely on me, eh?”

“A green collar would just match your eyes,” answered Albert, who wished to be truthful, and yet not offend the monster.

“Where does this little black-and-white animal, with the collar, live?” he continued in a moment.

“Under a very tall walnut-tree, farther up the path. He is there every afternoon between three and four.” Here the Croco-Snake yawned loudly.

“What is his name?” inquired Albert.

“*Skunk!*” answered the Croco-Snake, calmly, and then jumping to catch the last drop of esnesnon, which gurgled forth at

this moment, he crawled slowly off into the bushes. Albert's heart sank way down! He was frightened at the thought of going to any skunk's house, for any purpose whatsoever. So he trudged sadly down the hill, till he reached the Walking Boy. To him he told the story, and the two looked gloomily at each other.

"You give up the search now?" inquired Joe, anxiously.

Albert looked silently at him for a moment, then said courageously: "No, I do not give it up, Joe. I will call on the Skunk to-morrow."

"Brave boy," said Joe. "But do not forget to take a pill before speaking to him. He is simply crazy about poetry. In fact, I have heard that he writes it himself, sometimes."

The next day, the appointed hour found Albert trudging up the now familiar path

by the Walking Boy, who looked white and feeble, but who waved his hand encouragingly, past Mr. Scrugg's hut, by the Croco-Snake's stone, until he saw before him the very tall walnut-tree. Directly underneath it, sat a small, sleek, black-and-white animal, who was looking off, apparently admiring the view.

Albert knew that this was the particular Skunk he was after, for round the little creature's neck he could see the collar-set-with-emeraloons, which glistened greenly in the sun. With a quickly beating heart the boy approached, not forgetting this time to take a pill.

"Ahem, Sir," he began softly.

At this the Skunk gave a jump of astonishment, then rose and glared angrily at him! Albert felt very unhappy indeed, but he bowed and said sweetly, though his voice trembled a little:

“ If I holler
 For your collar
 Will you listen ?
 Will you hear ?
 If I take it
 I will make it
 Up to you, oh !
 Skunky dear ! ”

At this the Skunk's whole manner changed. He smiled very broadly, and said in the sweetest way :

“ Are you lying,
 Sir, or trying,
 Sir, to steal my
Collar-ette ?
 You can't get it,
 I won't let it,
 No one's ever
 Had it *yet !* ”

“ Ah, indeed, is that so ? ” said Albert, stupidly. He had never met a poetical

skunk before, and really did n't know what to say.

"Now," said the Skunk in a high squeaky voice, "if I give you my collar, you say you will 'make it up' to me. Just what do you mean by that? Explain yourself."

"I c-an't," stammered poor Albert. "I—I—was just fooling."

"Impossible," said the Skunk, angrily. "Don't you know, young man, that no one ever *fools* with a *Skunk*?"

Albert, terror-stricken, remained silent. This time the Poetical Pills had gotten him into trouble. They had forced his lips to say the words, and now there was really nothing that he could offer the Skunk. However, in a few moments, he plucked up courage and asked timidly if the Skunk would be willing to give up the collar in exchange for anything.

"Certainly not!" cried the little animal,

indignantly. "I adore my lovely collar, and would not exchange it for anything on earth—on earth," he repeated, "that is—unless—" here the Skunk paused for a full moment, "well," he continued, "to speak frankly, unless any one were to offer me The Cabbage."

"Oh," cried Albert eagerly, "if that is all, I will bring you one, at once. 'T is easy enough to get a cabbage."

"' *Taint!* " said the Skunk, crossly. "Of course it may be an easy thing to get *a* Cabbage, but not *The* Cabbage."

"Is the one you want a particular one?" asked the little boy.

"It is. In fact it is a very unusually particular one, for 't is a *Skunk* Cabbage!"

"But," said Albert slowly, "a skunk cabbage is also quite common."

"' *Taint!* " said the Skunk, as before. "That is, Skunk Cabbages may be com-

mon, but *The Skunk Cabbage* is perfectly uncommon! It is a 'never-ender,' you see, never gives out. You nibble one nice



Guarded by the bare-footed, long-necked boy.

little, tender little, luscious little leaf, and out pops another nice little, tender little, luscious little leaf, to take its place! It is a useful and pleasant thing to have in the Skunk family."

"Where is it to be found?" enquired Albert.

"Farther up the path. It grows in a field, under a spreading maple-tree, and is guarded by the Bare-footed Long-necked Boy. He sees visitors every day between three and four (and when he sees them he sends 'em away, at once," he added in a low voice).

Albert was relieved to find that the Cabbage was guarded by a boy, like himself.

"It is late now, but I will surely call there to-morrow," he said. "Good-bye!" and bowing politely, he walked away.

"*The* Skunk Cabbage is the sixth one in the fourth row," squealed the Skunk after him.

"All right," shouted Albert.

"*Taint!*"

"That seems to be his favorite word,"

thought Albert to himself, as he hurried to Joe's.

"It is too provoking, Albert," said he, after hearing the story of the day; "you will now give the thing up, I suppose?"

"No, indeed," Albert said firmly, "only I do hope that this time I shall be successful, for we are going home, the day after to-morrow."

"Let us hope for the best, then. I know all about that Cabbage Guarder, up there—he is also a lover of poetry, like the others. So do not forget to take the pill," cautioned the Walking Boy.

The following day, Albert started much earlier on account of the distance he had to go, but after passing the many familiar places, he finally reached the top of the mountain, where in a level field he saw to his joy, many cabbages. Big, and mid-

dling, and wee tender baby ones, were growing there, happily. In their midst, on what looked like a high piano-stool, sat the Bare-footed Boy. He was like other boys, except that he had a fearfully and wonderfully long neck—oh, it must have been twenty inches long, and that is pretty long, you know, *for a neck!* Albert saw at once, however, how useful it must be to him, in guarding the cabbages. For without moving his body, he could turn his head round with ease, in any direction he wished, and no one could approach without his knowing it.

The Boy at once caught sight of Albert, and frowned. Then, lifting the long stick he carried, he said menacingly, "What d'yer want, Boy? Go 'way!"

"Albert remembered and popped a pill (the last one he had) into his mouth, and repeated softly:

“May I have that charming Cabbage,
Growing yonder in the row?
Will you, won't you, give it to me
For the Skunk, who lives below?”

The effect of this was wonderful, for the Boy dropped his big stick, smiled pleasantly, and held out his hand eagerly, to Albert.

“That was a very beautiful poem,” he said cordially. Albert blushed, and the Boy asked him to sit down. “If you want a cabbage, take it,” he said, “take any one you like—except the sixth one in the fourth row.”

“Oh, but the sixth one in the fourth row happens to be the very one—in fact the only one—I want,” and poor Albert's heart sank.

“Can't have that one,” said the Cabbage Guarder, firmly. “That is *The* Cabbage, you know, and I'm guarding it. I have to

give twenty times more guard to that one than to any of the others."

"Well, I am awfully disappointed," said Albert, "I'd give almost anything for it," he added.

To this, the Bare-footed Boy said nothing for fully five minutes, then bending forward, he whispered eagerly: "See here, I have been in this field for four weary years, guarding *The Cabbage*. All that time I have sat here on this stool. That is a tiring thing to do, and I long for a chance to get up and walk. "Indeed I feel as if I could walk forever! But, of course, during this long time my feet have become so tender that I cannot take many steps without boots. Now, do you—ah, do you—happen to know anybody who has some good strong walking-boots, which he would be willing to give me?"

"I do, indeed I do," cried Albert. "Dear Long-neck, I know a boy who has a pair

of walking-boots, which he wants very much to get rid of. But oh—I forgot! The boots I speak of are really, truly ‘walking boots,’ and they insist on walking all the time—of their own accord! In fact, *they will not stop!* Of course you would n’t want them?”

“You are mistaken,” cried the Long-neck Boy, excitedly. “They are just exactly and absolutely the kind I do want. For after these long years of complete rest, I could walk *forever!* Go, Albert! Get them at once!”

“Alas!” said Albert, “’t is impossible. Their owner cannot part with them until someone brings him the fainting-rug.”

“Then get the fainting-rug.”

“I cannot. The owner is so strongly attached to it that he cannot tear himself away unless a drop of the famous essence of esnesnon is put in his mouth.”

"Then hurry and get for him this essence," cried Long-neck, impatiently.

"I can't," said Albert, "for alas! the Croco-Snake who owns the esnesnon-spring, refuses to give me even a single drop! That is, he says he will not unless—I get for him the collar-set-with-emeraloons!"

"A simple thing, that! Go and get it for him immediately," urged the other boy.

"I can't, because the Skunk loves the collar and will not give it up, unless—unless, in exchange, I bring him a Cabbage."

"Well, for goodness sake, boy, why don't you get him one? There are hundreds of them growing right here. Pick one!"

"But—'t is a Skunk Cabbage he needs."

"They are also common. Get one."

"You still don't understand. 'T is not

a common, but a *particular* Skunk Cabbage. In other words, 't is *The* Skunk Cabbage he wishes !”

“What?” roared Long-neck, “the black and white audacity of him! He really wants the *One I guard!*”

Albert nodded.

“Well, well, well, well, and also and moreover, well, well, well, well, *well!*” cried the Cabbage Guarder, in wildest excitement. “Did you ever? Did anybody ever? Answer me that!” Here he stopped, and bending down his long neck, rested his head on his hand, and appeared to be thinking deeply. Then he said slowly, and with great sadness: “Albert, I am afraid we must give up the whole thing. I cannot let you have *The* Cabbage, for it would not be right. I am here to guard it, for the law is that *no person must have it.*”

“But, Long-neck,” cried Albert eagerly,

“then why is n’t it right after all for me to have it? For you see I do not mean to give it to any *person*, but to a *skunk* and—a skunk is not a person!”

“I should say not!” agreed Long-neck, excitedly. “What you say is true. A skunk is a skunk, twenty times out of ten. Your logic is very good. I will give you *The Cabbage*, and you may take it now. I, meanwhile, will wait here, until you bring me the darling walking-boots.”

So stepping softly on his tender feet, the Guarder reached the fourth row, and stooping stiffly, picked the sixth cabbage, *The Cabbage*, and gave it to Albert! He, after promising to come back as quickly as he could, hurried down to the Skunk.

“I have *The Cabbage*!” he cried.

“You don’t say so!” shouted the Skunk, seizing it. This time, he was so pleased, that he actually jumped for joy. “Here,

take your old collar," he continued; "for what is a collar compared to a Cabbage, a Skunk Cabbage, *The Skunk Cabbage*, in fact?"

With fingers that trembled, Albert unfastened the collar, and with a quick good-bye, hurried on, till he reached the Croco-Snake.

"I have it! Here's the collar!" he cried.

"You don't say so," said the Croco-Snake, evidently much pleased. "Clasp it about my pretty neck." And when this had been done, "Isn't it a sweet match for my eyes?" he asked, adding, "now Boy, I'll keep my word. You shall have the very next drop of the essence of esnesnon. I expect it to pop out, in three minutes."

Albert held the empty pill-bottle under the opening in the rock, and waited in breathless suspense.

“*Glug-Glug!*” came soon from the hole, and out gushed the fresh pink liquid, dropping safely into the small bottle! Down the hill the boy flew, shouting a good-bye over his shoulder to the Croco-Snake, who made no answer, being busily engaged in twisting himself inside out, in frantic efforts to see his fine new collar.

The little hut was soon reached.

“Dorothy, Dorothy!” cried Albert, and the child came to the door. “I have the essence, the wonderful essence of esnesnon.”

“Oh, dear, you don’t say so!” said she, and burst into joyful tears. “Come in,” she continued, “and we will at once put some of it into poor dear papa’s mouth. Oh, won’t it be lovely to have a father again?”

Going to Mr. Scrugg’s side, Albert, his hand shaking with excitement, poured the essence carefully into the old man’s mouth, which Dorothy had deftly pried open with

a clothes-pin. In breathless anxiety, the two children awaited the result. It came immediately.

First, in the old man's tangled hair and long curly beard a little quivering motion could be seen, slow at first, becoming faster and faster; then swiftly, and with wonderful skill his hair began to untwine and disentangle itself from the rug! Next a little convulsive shiver passed through his body, his head moved slowly from side to side and both hands were raised high in the air, then with a long-drawn quivering sigh the old man sat up, opened his eyes sleepily, and gazed in astonishment, at the two children!

"Bless me," said he at last, in a hoarse, dry voice, "I think I must have dropped asleep for a moment, children," and he rose stiffly, and stood tottering on his feet. Then, catching sight of his long white

beard, he became frightened, and at once sat down again! Dorothy rushed into his arms, and kissing him tenderly, told him the story. Mr. Scrugg, of course, was deeply grateful to Albert, and was delighted to lend him the rug. The boy rolled it up at once, tucked it under his arm, (being careful not to look at it) and bidding the two a quick good-bye, scampered down the path, soon reaching Joe, who was staggering weakly along, his strength evidently almost gone.

“Have you the rug?” he cried.

“Yes, here it is, at last!” and the two boys shouted for joy.

“Well,” said Joe in a moment, “now we will find out what the famous fainting-rug can do for me. If it does the thing we expect it to, the Long-neck Boy shall have my boots. I will present them to him—from the very bottom of my *sole*! Now,

Albert, spread the rug there in my path, where I can get a fine clear view of it. You had better shut your own eyes, for it would be a disastrous thing, if we both fainted at the same time."

Albert obeyed, and spread the rug on the ground about six feet ahead of Joe, where the light would fall full upon it. On came the boy, walking a bit unsteadily from excitement. His eyes were firmly fixed upon the ugly rug. Suddenly his face grew white—he stopped short—swayed from side to side, and then with a little cry he fell fainting to the ground! The magic rug had done its work—it had lost none of its power, during its long rest!

Albert wasted no time in doing his part, but quickly unlaced the treacherous boots. Off they came at last, and in a moment, Joe regained his senses. When he found that the boots had been taken from his feet, he

actually shed tears of joy. The dreadful walking-boots were then hung about Albert's neck, and securely tied together by their lacings. They both stuck their tongues out in a very rude way, but they could not get away or help themselves.

"And now," said Joe, at last, as he wiped his eyes, "the fainting-rug must be returned. I will take it back myself."

"All right," agreed Albert, "and I promised to bring the boots to the Cabbage-Boy."

The two walked together as far as the Scrugg cottage, and from there Albert went on alone, happy in the thought that he had been able to help so many people.

When he reached the Cabbage-field, he found the Long-necked Boy lying at full length on the ground. "I have been resting," said he, "I am so glad to be off that

stool. When you have sat on one for a few years, you will understand yourself, what I mean. And Albert, it is also a tremendous relief to me, not to be obliged to keep my poor head constantly turning, first this way and then that, you know, while searching for cabbage-stealers."

Albert nodded sympathetically

"Now, let me have the boots, for I long to start on my happy walk," and the Cabbage-Boy held out his hand.

Albert gave them to him, warning him once more, as to the danger. But the other boy only smiled and first shaking Albert's hand in a cordial good-bye, quickly put on the boots, which fortunately fitted him perfectly. Then he stood upon his feet, the boots gave one vicious protesting kick, and at once *began to walk*, taking their new master out of sight, in a mere twinkling!

Albert stood for a moment, staring after him, then said, slowly, "Well! well! well! They certainly made no mistake when they called this hill "Mount Mystery."

“CHINNY”

PAPA had promised to take Haven to the circus the next afternoon. The boy had gone to bed and was soon fast asleep dreaming of lions and things; of elephants larger and grayer than those one sees in the day-time, and of extremely strip-ed tigers and roaring lions (the kind that never stop roaring for an instant, you know).

While he slept, a messenger-boy walked v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y up the avenue, to the door, and rang the bell. This boy wore a coat, in the coat was a pocket, and in the pocket lay a telegram, which said:

“Come to New York at once.”

Now, when telegrams say that sort of

thing, the people to whom they are sent, obey instantly; so the poor father packed his bag in a hurry, ran to the station, and was whisked off by the midnight train to New York. As the train puffed and cindered itself along, he said, "Poor Haven will have no circus to-morrow. I am sorry for him."

Of course, when the little boy awoke to this disappointment, things did indeed look black, but that was no excuse for the disgraceful conduct which followed. All through the morning he was extremely naughty. He threw Molly's best doll into the well, almost drowning the lovely little lady; he pulled baby Harriet's hair and he did many other wrong things! At last his mother sent him out of the house in disgrace. The little boy walked slowly down to the beach and seated himself sullenly on the sand. His angry eyes looked out

over the calm blue waters, and followed a long gray smudge which a passing ocean-steamer had carelessly left behind.

"I wish I were on that boat," he muttered, "going off somewhere, away from them all."

"Then come with me," said a soft little voice at his elbow.

Haven looked about, but saw no one.

"Won't you come with me?" continued the muffled voice, rather wistfully now.

Haven looked again. Some one had certainly spoken, but—there was no one in sight!

"Well," said the voice again, "have you made up your mind, Boy, and will you come?"

Haven (now really troubled) looked down at the sand, for it was from there that the wee voice seemed to come. Nothing was to be seen, however, but a land-crab

(hurrying off to meet a friend) and a fat, spiky sea-urchin. The latter Haven absent-mindedly picked up.

"Thank you for lifting me," said the voice, and, in amazement, the boy instantly dropped the small creature, for, can you believe me, when I tell you that the voice came from it; that it was the *sea-urchin himself* who had spoken?

"Oh," cried the little fellow sharply, "you ought to know better than to drop me like that; my delicate house might have broken!"

"Why, wh-wh- who are you?" stammered Haven at last, picking up the shell gently.

"I am an urchin," was the calm answer. "The only difference between you and me, is that I'm a sea-urchin, while you're a land-urchin. Turn me over."

This Haven did, and there, to his amaze-

ment, he saw *a wee boy* about three inches high!

"Are you a fairy?" he asked.

"Certainly not. Look at me, and you'll see that I am not."

This Haven did. "What's your name?" he enquired, "Mine's Haven."

"I have no particular name," said the urchin, somewhat sadly. "You may call me anything you like, however; that is, anything that would not be painful to me."

"Well," said Haven thoughtfully, "Sea-urchin is too long a name. 'Urchie' might do, or 'Chinny.' How's that? I'll call you 'Chinny'—if you think you'd like it?"

"Sure," was the answer.

"It is too bad that you are so small, Chinny. I like you very much, you know, but you certainly are a little—I mean, you seem to me to be just a little——"

"That's it," interrupted the urchin. "I

am not small—in fact I am just the right size, but to you I seem to be small, because you don't see me as I really am. I will make that all right. Wait!"

Off ran the little creature, his wee legs fairly twinkling. In a short time he reappeared, with his arms full of a strange kind of seaweed. It was transparent, and of a bright blue color.

"That is awfully pretty," said Haven; "I never saw anything like it. What kind is it?"

"The kind I was after," said Chinny shortly. "Eat it."

"Oh—I'm afraid to."

"It's all right," said the urchin reassuringly, as he nibbled a bit, himself.

Convinced then, and a little ashamed of his hesitation, Haven took the seaweed, and began to eat it. 'Twas not a hard thing to do, either, for it tasted liked fricasseed

peanuts. He quickly disposed of the whole bunch.

“Now, sit down,” directed the urchin. “Take long breaths, shut your eyes and don’t open them till I speak.”

Haven obeyed, and in about three minutes felt a light touch on his arm. He opened his eyes and started back in amazement, for (although he had heard no footsteps) there, close by his side, sat a boy,—a jolly-looking boy, somewhat older than he, whose dark eyes, sparkling with mischief, were fixed full upon him.

“I’m Chinny,” he said with a grin. “Am I big enough, now?”

“B-b-but,” stammered Haven, “what’s happened to you? You certainly do look like Chinny; but,—how could you grow up, so quickly?”

“Oh, that is all in the way one sees things,” explained Chinny smiling. “You

did n't see me as I really was, you know, so I gave you some real seaweed, and now of course you see the *true* me. 'T is very simple."

"But that 'see' is not spelled the same way," objected Haven.

"Oh, you may spell it any way you like," answered Chinny. "If it only does its work well, it makes not the slightest difference how one spells it."

"But—will common seaweed do this sort of thing?" enquired Haven, after hesitating for a moment. "This is the first time I ever ate any, you know."

"Let it be the last," warned Chinny solemnly, "for the common seaweed is as different from what I gave you as six and two are nine."

"Six and two—nine?"

"Don't repeat what I say Haven. It's rude."

“But, Chinny, it is n’t true,” objected Haven.

“Then you certainly should n’t repeat what you know to be untrue,” and the sea-urchin smiled triumphantly. “But let me explain something: What you ate, Haven, was the genuine seaweed; and it takes an absolutely genuine sea-urchin of the sea, to see such seaweed! See?”

“I—see,” said Haven doubtfully.

“I’ll sing you a song about that.”

“Oh, can you sing, Chinny?”

“No, I can’t, but I can sing *about* it. Listen:—

‘When you see seaweed,
Run away quick!
If a boy eats it
He will be sick!’

“I made up that song myself—just now! Is n’t it beautiful?”

“No, Chinny,” said truthful Haven; “I don’t think it is beautiful.”

“You don’t? Well here is another, with new words. Do you like this any better? It makes no difference to me. I’d just as soon sing one as the other.

‘If you eat seaweed
You will be ill.
Then your dear mother
Will give you a pill.’

“That’s a pretty thing, is n’t it? Really a lovely bit?” and here the urchin looked anxiously at Haven.

“Why no, Chinny, I don’t like that either.”

“Don’t you, Haven? Let me try again, then. How’s this?” and once more the sea-urchin began loudly:

“If one eats seaweed
He will have nausea—”

“But, Chi nny,” interrupted Haven im-

patiently, "I am not going to eat it again."

"Oh," said the urchin, crestfallen; "if that is so, then I suppose I can not sing about it either. But now, Haven, are you coming home with me?"

"I'd like to, Chinny. Where is your home?"

The urchin screwed up his round pink face, until his eyes looked like two black slits.

"My home is on an island, many miles, and more, from here," and he pointed vaguely toward the blue sea.

"I'd like to go there some day, Chinny, but it is too late now—it is almost twelve o'clock, and we have luncheon at one."

The sea-urchin glanced shrewdly at his companion, then moving nearer, he whispered: "Haven, were you naughty, and did they send you out of the house this morning?"

"Yes," confessed the little boy, hanging his head.

Chinny chuckled. "I'll tell you something. I was naughty too, and they sent me away from home. This was several weeks ago, however; I am very sorry now, and I am going back again."

"Why did they send you away, Chinny?" asked Haven, sympathetically.

"Because I was saucy and talked too much. And then I made poems—poems and puns." Here the sea-urchin wiped his eyes with his torn coat-sleeve.

"But, were they bad poems—the poems you made?"

"*Very* bad, all of them, and the puns were poxious."

"*'Poxious,'*" enquired Haven, "what are 'poxious' puns?"

"They are the kind I always make," answered the urchin.

“’T is a very strange word,” ventured Haven.

“Not nearly as strange as the puns themselves are. But come on.”

“Really, I cannot go with you, Chinny, without mamma’s permission,” objected Haven, “and there is n’t enough time, anyway.”

“That is so, we are short of time. But that need not trouble us, for what is simpler than to borrow some?”

Haven laughed. “It may be simple,” he said, “but where, and how?”

Chinny smiled, and taking his friend’s reluctant hand, led him a short distance down the beach, to a big boulder, which in the neighborhood was called the Gray Friar. The sea-urchin walked boldly to it and knocked, while his companion laughed outright at his bewildered look, as nothing came of it. Then Chinny’s face lighted.

"Great Starfish! I made a mistake. It is on the south," he exclaimed, and hurried to the other side of the boulder. There he again knocked, and pressing his dark curly head against the gray side, awaited breathlessly an answer. And then it was Haven's turn to be surprised, for, coming from the rock itself, he distinctly heard a faint, long "*Halloooooo!*"

Haven had a momentary wish to escape—to run away. But he was ashamed to, and besides he really felt great curiosity as to what would happen next. What *did* happen was this: the side of the rock nearest the boys, began to soften gradually, its outlines became uncertain and wavering, while everything looked foggy and vague.

"Come on," shouted Chinny.

And Haven grasping his hand tightly, walked straight into the boulder! After a few groping steps, the boys saw before

them a dim, uncertain light, which they followed.

“We shall soon see him,” whispered the sea-urchin.

“See whom?”

Chinny made no answer, but hurried on. A few more steps, and the boys found themselves in a large hall dimly lighted by lamps, which hung from the arched ceiling.

“There he is!” cried Chinny, pointing to a moving object before them. At first, Haven could not make out what it was, and then, as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light, he found that he was looking at the flying figure of a very old man, who was racing madly round, and round, and round the hall! His loose draperies and long white hair were floating wildly on the breeze, he looked neither to the right nor left, and never stopped, never paused for an instant.

“Wh—who is it? What is it?” gasped Haven.

“Don’t you recognize him? It is Father Time!”

“What is he doing?”

“Flying. ‘Time flies,’ you know.”

“I have heard that,” said Haven, “but I never saw Father Time himself, before. I have seen pictures of him, however, and he looks like his picture, doesn’t he? There are his sickle and hour-glass and all his things! I am glad I came, Chinny,—it is awfully interesting!”

“Now, see me stop him,” whispered the urchin at this point.

Running to the middle of the hall, he stood for a moment, erect and fearless, looking unabashed, into the piercing eyes of Father Time, who—still flying wildly about the hall, gazed reproachfully at the rash boy who had dared to enter his do-

main. Haven was much frightened, and shook in his shoes, but Chinny, quite unmoved, raised his voice and called shrilly: "Stop, Father Time! Wait, wait a moment!"

"Time waits for no man!" came the answer, in a deep hoarse voice.

"But we are not *men*, Father Time. We are *boys*!" shouted Chinny.

This remark evidently made a great impression on the old gentleman. "That is true," he said musingly, "you are boys, only boys, poor things! That being the case, I will stop—for a moment." Gathering his floating draperies about him, and flying more and more slowly, the wonderful old man stood at last, quietly before them. Chinny meanwhile, had returned to Haven's side.

Father Time, tapping his sickle impatiently, looked sternly at the two, and asked them what they wanted.

"We wish to borrow some time, Sir," said Chinny very politely.

"None to lend! Not a minute to spare!"



Chinny seized that curly lock firmly.

was the answer, crossly given, and Father Time shook his head emphatically, his white hair flying in all directions. One long silky curl hung straight down, over his wrinkled forehead.

Chinny's bright eye saw this, and giving one quick jump, he seized that curly lock firmly with both hands!

“Here, here! hands off! Let go my forelock,” screamed Father Time, angrily; “my only and my beautiful cherished forelock.”

“No, no,” cried the sea-urchin, triumphantly. “Now I have you in my power, old gentleman! This is luck indeed. Haven, you know the old saying, ‘Take Time by the forelock!’ Well, if you succeed in doing so, he must grant whatever favor you ask.”

“I have heard the saying,” said Haven; “but I never knew before, what it meant.”

Fortunately Chinny did know, and so did poor Father Time, whose manner had now changed entirely. From a proud, self-reliant old man he had suddenly become humble—crushed.

"What is it you want, Boy?" he asked, with much meekness.

"Three days," said Chinny, firmly.

"Borrowed?"

"No, you must give them to me."

"Outright?"

"Outright."

Father Time groaned. "And must the nights go with them?" he asked sadly.

"Certainly, there must be the full twenty-four hours in each."

"You shall have them. I must obey, you know," moaned Father Time, despairingly; "and when I have done so, will you take away your hands from my cherished forelock?"

"I will, I promise. But, Father, we must have good time."

"I keep only the best," replied the old man, with returning spirit. "I know the importance of keeping perfect time."

“The gift was then presented, and Chinny released Father Time who, with a wild cry, began again his mad flight about the hall. Quickly the two excited boys made their escape through the dim passage, and out from the boulder, which, closing behind them, became once more a hard gray rock.

On the beach outside, Haven asked to see the time.

“Time can’t be seen,” said the sea-urchin contemptuously, “don’t you know that?”

“I suppose I do, but I have seen so many things this morning that can’t be seen, that I thought——”

“Now see here, boy, you must n’t think,” interrupted Chinny, impatiently, “for I am thinking myself now. If you do it too, of course it will take twice as much time, and I assure you we have none to waste. We must think as little as possible, anyway, and never at the same moment. Remember!”

Haven did n't understand this, but it sounded so reasonable, that he promised to be very careful. "Now, I will run up and ask mamma if I may go with you," he added.

"There is n't time for that, either," said Chinny impatiently. "But it is all right, Haven. Let me explain. You see what the old man gave us, is *extra time*, and is wedged in between now and your lunch-time. It is our time—yours and mine. No one else has anything to do with it—no one knows of it, so we can do what we like in it. We are not going to do anything wrong, however; nothing your mother would n't like, you know."

"And shall I be at home for luncheon?" asked Haven, hesitatingly, for he wanted very much to go.

"Certainly, I promise that as the clock strikes '*One*,' you will be entering your house-door."

Then at last, all the circumstances being so very unusual, Haven consented to go with his new friend!

“The tide is just right,” cried the urchin merrily.

“So it is; but, oh Chinny, there is one important thing we have forgotten, and that is—a boat for our journey.”

“I have n’t forgotten. You’ll see,” and taking his companion’s hand, the boy said earnestly: “Haven, have you any imagination?”

“Yes, mamma says I have a very strong imagination, but——”

“That is *good*. For—although we are going to my beautiful home in a boat, ’t is not in a real, but in a make-believe one.”

“A make-believe boat, Chinny,” gasped poor Haven. “Oh, I don’t want to go in one of those, at all! I am sure I should n’t like it.”

"Ever been in one?"

"No," confessed Haven, "I haven't."

"Then you know nothing at all about them. Now I have been in them often and they are fine. In the first place, you can't be seasick you know; there are no oily smells; no 'chunk-i-ty chunking' of machinery, no fear of accidents, and—the trip costs nothing. In fact, there are many advantages in the F. S. S. Company."

"What does 'F. S. S.' mean?"

"Fake Steam Ship Company."

"Why 'fake'?"

"Why *not*?" asked Chinny sharply. "But, as I was saying, Haven, I am glad that you have imagination, for with it one can go anywhere. You will have a much drier and more comfortable trip. If you had n't had any, I should have taken you, of course, but in that case, I should have been obliged to drag you through the water, and

you'd have been awfully wet, wetter than the letter T, my boy!"

"I should n't have liked that, at all. But Chinny, what do you mean by being 'wetter than T'? The letter T is n't any wetter than any other letter," and Haven laughed.

"Oh, is n't it?" said Chinny sarcastically, "is n't it always in water?"

"Yes, but,——"

"Would water be the wet thing it is, if you took away the letter T?" T-less water could never quench thirst nor bear ships. It would simply dry up, and crumble away."

"But Chinny, I don't think that it can be the T that makes it wet."

"Don't you? Then I'll prove it to you. Take, for instance the word 'wet' itself. It has one T, in it, has n't it? That's what makes it wet. Take away this T and what have you then? You have 'we' and *we* are not wet, now are we? I ask you that,"

said Chinny triumphantly. "And then," he went on "all you have to do is to add the T, and it instantly becomes 'wet' again."

Haven, bewildered, did not dispute this.

"After all, 't is very simple," continued the urchin. "We have proved that there is one moist T in wet. Now, how many are there, in wetter? Two. Consequently, wetter is two times wetter than wet! Then finally, in the word 'wettest' one finds three Ts, doesn't he? This proves of course, without doubt, that wettest is wetter than wet, wetter than wetter—wettest of all!"

Haven was now completely bewildered, and quite convinced that whatever Chinny said must be true, no matter how strangely it sounded.

The sea-urchin smiled triumphantly. "Now," he continued in a moment, "let us attend to business. Come with me to

the sand-ridge, and we will search the waters for a boat.”

Hand in hand, the two boys stood gazing.

“Now, Haven, try hard. Use all your imagination. I will do the same, and pretty soon a boat will come to us.”

Silently, with staring eyes and quickly beating hearts, the two gazed out and away. Before long, Chinny gave a cry. “There, it comes. I see a faint gray dot. Look! Look!”

Haven was white from excitement. At first he could see nothing, but he kept on looking intently in the direction in which the sea-urchin pointed. Then, thinking hard, putting his whole mind to it, he too, imagined he could “see.” At first ’t was but a gray formless something, which was gliding swiftly, silently toward them, then

“I see, Chinny! Oh, I really see it, now!”

he shouted, and as the shape of the little phantom ship became more surely defined to the eye, both the boys jumped up and down in wild excitement.

“I see the sails now,” cried Chinny.

“So do I, —what a big mainsail she has, has n’t she?”

In a few moments more the boat was near, and at last, gliding noiselessly up to the very beach itself, lay quitely at rest before them!

“Oh, she has grounded!” cried Haven, in great distress.

“That is impossible, for no ship belonging to the F. S. S. Line ever grounds,” said the sea-urchin calmly. “’Tis a fine safe line. Come aboard.”

“How can we get aboard? I see no ladders nor——”

“Why it ’s as easy as four are nine. Look at me!” and sure enough, the little

fellow clambered up the steep side of the ship, with no difficulty, shouting to Haven to follow, which he did. To his surprise, it proved after all, not a difficult matter, as at each step, his feet and clutching hands sank deep into the ship's soft gray sides.

In a twinkling, the two boys were aboard and walking about the deck, which had a most attractive fluffy feeling to the foot. There was apparently no one on board, no captain, sailors, nor officers.

“Where are the crew?” asked Haven.

“We are the crew.”

“Then how does the boat sail?”

“She trims her own sails, but we must help fill them, if the wind fails. Our will (which summoned her) steers the ship. Shall we start now? Are you ready?”

Haven gave one last look at his father's house (which had a strange far-away look), and nodded his head.

The boat remained as before, the sails flap-flapping idly in the faint breeze. "Oh," said Chinny, "I forgot. The wind in here in the bay is not strong enough. We must now do our part and help fill the sails. *Sing!*"

"Sing?" repeated Haven in astonishment. "Sing what?"

"Oh, whatever you like."

Haven bewildered but obedient, opened his mouth and sang "Yankee Doodle!"

No sooner did the voice ring out than the sails slowly filled with the patriotic air, and the mysterious boat glided on her journey.

"We shall have to sing these light airs during the day probably, unless the breeze stiffens," said Chinny, "but as neither you nor I have any voice for singing, a little ought to go a long way, ought n't it?"

"I never knew before," said Haven,

“that you could make a boat go by merely singing a song.”

“Did n’t you? Well, boats are n’t the only things that go for a mere song.”

“So that’s what that phrase means, Chinny? I did n’t know that, either. How much I am learning to-day, and many things that are not generally known, I am sure.”

“So am I,” said the urchin, a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

The two boys settled themselves comfortably for the journey. They both lay at full length on the soft gray deck, and gazed up into the cloudless blue sky above. Absolute stillness was about them, and the boat glided swiftly along over the smooth sea.

“This is too fine for anything,” said Haven, at last. “Chinny, you’re a trump.”

The sea-urchin looked at his companion affectionately, and smiled. Then he smiled

again. "I always smile twice, when I am extra-pleased," he said. "I like you too, little friend, in fact I would rather be with you, than not to be with any other boy! That sounds like flattery I know, but really Haven, you are equal to *no one else!*"

A breeze had now sprung up and the sails, as the sea-urchin had foretold, trimmed themselves cleverly, while the boat fairly flew through the water.

"Dear me!" cried Haven in sudden alarm; "I did n't notice it before, Chinny, but when I look down, it seems as if I could see the horrid black water, right through the boat; it is awful!"

"Now, Haven," ordered Chinny sharply, "if you look down, the first thing you know, down you'll go yourself 'kerchunk' right through the boat into the water! Look up at the blue sky and bright sun overhead. As long as you keep looking

up, you're all right, and by the way, that is a good rule to follow at all times, and wherever you are."

Haven obeyed and found, sure enough, that when he kept to these simple directions all fear left him.

"How long will the journey last?" he enquired.

"We shall get there to-morrow."

For a short time the two boys chatted together, and then darkness seemed to come quickly. One by one, the bright stars peeped out, and they slept.

To Haven the sleep was a somewhat troubled one, and when he heard Chinny say "Get up!" he answered sleepily, "In a minute."

"No, not in a minute. No time to waste, remember. Get up!" and Chinny's voice was stern. "The day has come. We are almost in sight of land."

At these exciting words, Haven sprang to his feet, and sure enough, there before them in the distance, he saw the entrancingly beautiful home of his friend the sea-urchin. Another half hour brought them very near, so near that the perfume of flowers was plainly borne to them, on the soft breeze. The island, which was long and low, was densely shaded by giant trees, whose delicate tracery lay clear cut against the intensely blue sky beyond. A softly curving beach, its white sand glistening like silver in the bright sun, stretched protecting arms toward them on either side, making a natural harbor.

In a moment, their ship grated gently upon the beach, and the two slipped quickly over her side, gripping velvety uncertain ropes and clutching at elusive gray projections. One or two smiling people came hurrying down, and gave them welcome.

Then an older man and woman, Chinny's parents, came toward their little son and embraced him affectionately. Next they all turned their backs and knocked their heads together! To Haven this seemed a funny way of kissing, for that, he found, was what they were doing; but when he spoke of this later, the sea-urchin asked why it was any funnier than to do as we do.

Chinny told his father about Haven and asked permission to show him the island. "Do so," said the old gentleman kindly, "then come back to our house to luncheon. Show the little stranger every other thing—as well as every thing."

The boys left alone, climbed up the steep winding path, which led to the settlement above. "Now, Haven—*smile!*" said Chinny.

"Why?"

“Because it is the custom of my country—we all smile.”

“Always?”

“Always,” and the sea-urchin’s mouth widened into a broad grin.

Haven did the same, and soon found that it was really as Chinny had said, for everyone whom they met was smiling, and as friends passed each other, the smile broadened. The effect of all this was very gay and pleasing.

At last, the two boys reached the top of the path, and there before Haven’s marvelling eyes lay spread the most beautiful country he had ever seen! The many beautiful giant maiden-hair-fern trees gave grateful shade, and winding grassy lanes led in different directions. On either side were rows of small thatched cottages, all exactly alike, and each surrounded by flowers. Haven had never seen anything like it, and

he was wild with delight. He soon noticed that every cottage had taken some one flower, completely filling his garden with that, and only that. The effect was very lovely. One had violets, another pink roses, another lilies of the valley, and so on. The boys walked on, passing house after house. Some of the people were busy in their gardens, picking flowers, weeding, hoeing, and so forth.

After having seen the little settlement, the sea-urchin took his guest to a rustic summer-house on a grassy knoll, where they sat down and admired the ocean view before them.

Then Haven asked Chinny, why the people dressed as they did. "Each one wears one color only. The lady we just met, had a blue gown, blue hat, and even blue shoes and stockings, I noticed. And those two people over there, are dressed entirely in pink."

“I’ll tell you why they do that,” explained Chinny. “’T is a beautiful idea, too. You see, each family chooses some flower for its garden, and then they all dress in that color. Usually the houses themselves are fitted out in the same tint. And there are a few of our people (not many, I’m glad to say) who eat food of the same color, too!”

“W-why,” gasped Haven; “How can they possibly do that?”

“Oh, they are not obliged to, you understand,” explained Chinny; “but of course, it can be done if people care to. For instance, there are two sisters here, whose houses are side by side. One has chosen the butter-cup for her flower; the other, the white daisy. The first one’s color is of course, yellow, so her house is yellow, she dresses in yellow, and she eats only yellow things! Oranges, lemons, yellow bananas, squash, and pumpkin pie, butter corn-cake,

and the yolks of eggs. This happens to be quite a convenient arrangement, too, for the whites of eggs are eaten by the sister who lives next door. Her flower is the daisy, you see, and she eats therefore, white things. Milk, cream, white-fish, cheese, bread, crackers, vanilla ice-cream, etc. Oh, those two sisters manage to live very prettily. But there is an old bachelor here, whose house is furnished in blue, for he has chosen for his flower, the bachelor's button. He dresses in blue, of course, and he eats only blue things! Now, there are scarcely any blue things that can be eaten, you know, Haven, so he eats *blueberries*, poor man.”

“What, nothing but blueberries?” gasped Haven.

“Nothing. Blueberries raw, steamed, and stewed. Blueberry pie and blueberry cake. I declare, it makes me feel blue, just to think of it!”

Haven laughed. But the sea-urchin grew pale, and looked about anxiously. "Oh dear, I am sorry I made that pun," said he. "It was a particularly poxious one, too. Please forget it."

"I will, Chinny. Tell me something about this island."

"Well, several hundred years ago," began the urchin, "a small party of people came here on the good ship *Cheese-It*, and those whose ancestors came over on that ship, are proud of that fact. As all our ancestors came in it, we are a proud people—very proud. Trees were planted, lanes laid out, and cottages built. Each cottage was numbered 2, 4, 6, 8, and so on. We used only the even numbers, you notice, for we feared that it might look *odd*, if we did n't. The idea has been, to make this a country where everyone would be perfectly happy and contented. We try to be kind to other

people, and to smile always. Consequently one never hears a cry here, nor is a harsh word ever spoken.”

“But, Chinny, there are babies here, and they always howl, I know”; and Haven smiled as he thought of his little sister Harriet’s lusty cry.

“Yes, of course, the babies do cry, but no one hears them. On the way down I will show you what we do to them. You have n’t seen our interesting ‘cryery’ yet,” and Chinny laughed outright. “But, the little children are all very good. From the beginning, we train them to be kind and generous, you see. We make them play ball, puss-in-corner, and other generous games.”

“Are they generous games?”

“Of course they are, for in them, one keeps giving up, all the time,” explained Chinny. “What can be more generous than a game of ball, for instance? You toss the

ball to another kid ; he does n't keep it, but hurries to give it back to you. You return it at once, and so it goes, each giving to the other, and each becoming in consequence, more generous as the game proceeds. Puss-in-corner too, is a beautifully generous game, each person constantly insisting that some other fellow should take his corner—forcing it on him, you know. So too it is in tag, where one gives a tag to someone else, all the time.”

“But don't the fellows of our age forget and get mad sometimes?” enquired Haven.

Chinny hesitated a very long time, before he answered this question, and then he said slowly: “No, Haven, they don't, because,—well because—there *are n't* any fellows of our age on the island (and mighty few girls, either).

“*What!*” cried Haven, “do they all die young?”

“Oh, no!” laughed the urchin; “let me explain. From the beginning the grown-up people here obeyed its laws, while the babies and little children were easily controlled. But when the children reached the age of eight or nine, the parents found that they began to be troublesome. They were too big to be treated as the little ones were, and yet they were not old enough to act like sensible grown people. They distressed the whole town by rudeness and noise, and sometimes by quarrelling! This made the fathers and mothers sad. The smiles left their faces, and anxious looks were to be seen everywhere. This would never do, so they had a meeting and in it decided what to do. It was this. All children, boys or girls (living on this island), who had reached the troublesome age, were to be sent away, gotten rid of—*bounced*! From that time on, this has been done. A spiky umbrella

is put over them, they are forced to become sea-urchins, and are sent away, sailing to distant countries where they stay, some for long, some for longer, or even in extreme cases, for longest, as the case may or may not be. Then they return on a visit or on trial. At the first naughty act or word, however, bang! they are again sent away, this time in a different direction. There are a great many of us, Haven. Sea-urchins are to be found on every coast, and *every one of them* comes originally from this little island! The law works well, for through it peace and happiness have now come to our island."

"What brought your ancestors here in the first place?" asked Haven.

"The ship *Cheese-It*."

"But I mean, what did they come for?"

"*Forever!*" answered the urchin solemnly. Then rising he suggested to his

companion that they had better return, and have a look at the “cryery” on the way. Down the hill, under the shade of the beautiful feathery trees went the two boys. Turning sharply to the left, they took a path which led away from the village.

“This goes to the ‘cryery,’” explained Chinny; “but come back to the main road, for I want you to see everything in this department, from the very beginning.”

Reaching the road they met many brightly clad smiling young mothers, holding babies, leading babies, playing with babies; while the babies themselves, clad each like its mother, were smiling, chuckling, and “goo-googling” just like other wee people all over the world! “Are n’t they jolly little kids?” whispered Haven admiringly.

“Yes, but wait”; and Chinny seated himself on the mossy bank and motioned to Haven to do the same.

Just then, a fat little pink tot with golden curls floating merrily behind, and chuckling at some secret joke, came toddling bravely



The cart started on its way back to the “cryery.” toward them. Suddenly, the baby feet stumbled and down she fell—a bad fall, too! Before she could pick herself up, however, or even open her mouth to cry, her pink-

clad mamma had given a loud shrill call with the silver whistle which hung from her neck, and a man came hurrying down the cryery path, wheeling a jangling cart, on which was a softly padded basket, hung on the springiest of springy springs. Into this, the pink cry-baby, now howling lustily, was quickly lifted. No sooner was she in, and the cart started on its way back to the “cryery,” than the little cradle began to sway up and down, back and forth, from side to side, setting in motion thousands of tiny musical silvery-toned bells, which rang, sang, chimed, and drowned the poor little, fat little, pink little girlie, into silence! “Come,” said Chinny, “we will follow”; and he and Haven hurried after.

The “cryery” was a large tree-shaded fenced-in garden. Outside at intervals were stationed men, and each of them had a hand-organ on which he was turn-turning

and grind-grinding awfully gay dances and merry jigs.

The two boys entered. Haven quickly noticed that the trees here were willows, and different from the others on the island—no beautiful maiden hair-fern trees were to be seen. He mentioned this to Chinny, who laughed. “These are weeping-willows. We considered them the only proper trees for the ‘cryery,’ ” he explained.

There were not many babies in the garden, but Haven saw that each one there was tied loosely to a tree, its smiling mother standing near, waiting until the cry should be over. This never took very long, for the organs all played so very gaily, that it was hard to hear one’s self cry at all, and even a baby quickly makes up its mind that there is no fun in crying, if no one can hear or appreciate your work! So in a jiffy-and-a-half most of the babies began to smile.

Haven and Chinny now hurried out, meeting on the way two new little baby-criers on the jangly bell carriage.

The boys knew that they were crying, from their puckered-up faces, but the bells talked so loudly, that they could hear nothing. Haven made up his mind that as soon as he reached home, his baby sister Harriet should have one of those carriages! They soon reached the sea-urchin's home. About this cottage grew pale pink roses, and inside, it was finished in delicate rose-pink.

Chinny's family welcomed them cordially, and they were about to sit down to luncheon, when the sea-urchin suddenly rose from the table, with a troubled look on his face, and calling his father aside, consulted for a moment. Returning, he said: "Haven, I am awfully sorry, but you cannot take luncheon here, after all. We stayed too long in the

‘cryery,’ I am afraid; and it is now time for you to say good-bye and to *go home!*”

Haven looked at his watch, but found that instead of ticking in its usual quiet way, the hands were chasing each other round and round the dial as if they had suddenly become crazy! They were making such quick time, that he could scarcely see them!

“Look, Chinny!” he cried; “is n’t that queer?”

“’T is the extra time we forced on them, I suppose,” explained Chinny; “hands dislike to be hurried,—or to work overtime, you know.”

“I am sorry you cannot stay for luncheon, Haven,” said the urchin’s mother, at the same time pressing a large piece of strawberry shortcake into the boy’s willing hand.

Haven now said good-bye to the family, and with the sea-urchin hurried back to the

beach, where the shadowy boat awaited them. In a moment the two were aboard. "Chinny," said Haven nervously, "I wish you were going with me. I feel as if I could n't manage this great boat alone."

"Of course you can," said the urchin, reassuringly. "It will go as easy as two goes in one."

"But they could n't! What strange things you do say, Chinny! How could they?" objected Haven irritably. "One can go in two, but *never* two in one."

"Wrong as usual," observed the urchin, calmly, "two *can* go in one, and frequently do. For instance, did n't we two boys go in one boat? And we were n't even crowded, either! But it is what *you* say, Haven, that 'one can go in two,' which is really absurd. That is an impossibility. One boy could not go in two boats, now

frankly, could he? That is, not at the same moment!"

Haven was completely bewildered, and did n't know what to say.

"Now, little friend, you have just time enough," proceeded the urchin, "to make the journey back, and to reach your own house at one o'clock, just as I promised you should do. This return journey will take less time than to come here."

"Why?" enquired Haven.

Chinny gave him a pitying look, and said: "Because there were twice as many people then, as now, and of course it always takes two people twice as long to do a thing, as it does one! Now good-bye, Haven, you're a pretty good fellow, anyway, and who knows? Perhaps you have learned something here, so that in future, you may be a *very* good one?"

With a vigorous handshake, Chinny now

slid over the ship's side to the beach. "If the breeze dies down," he shouted, "don't forget to sing some light air, and—look always *up*, and never *down*!"

"I'll remember. I might get 'wetter than T' if I did n't," laughed Haven.

Then the phantom ship began to glide noiselessly on her long journey. Haven tied his handkerchief to a stick and waved it at the sea-urchin who, putting his hands to his face, called out loudly: "Don't ever be cross! Smile! Smile! Smile!"

These words lingered strangely in Haven's ears. He looked back at the sea-urchin standing there on the beach, his erect little figure sharply outlined against the white sand, and knew he should miss his cheerful companionship. Then—a sudden mist came before his eyes, and—he could see him no more. The beautiful island itself

remained in sight for a few moments longer, when it too faded, until it was but a faint blur on the horizon. Then—even that disappeared, for the Fake S. S. Co. boat with but one passenger aboard, and a strong wind in her favor, sailed tremendously fast!

Haven, remembering Chinny's directions to "look up and never down," stretched himself at full length on the velvety deck, and gazed at the blue sky, trying to recall all his strange experiences. After that, he never could remember whether he slept or not, but he was suddenly aroused by hearing a gentle grating noise under the ship! He jumped up, and to his delight, found that the mysterious boat had brought him in safety again, to his own beach! His father's house he could see dimly, through the gray mist which seemed to shroud everything, that day. How he got down from the boat,

regained his size, and crossed the beach, Haven never could remember, but he suddenly found himself at his father's house. And just as he entered the door, the big solemn hall-clock struck: “*One!*”

THE CHILD-IMPROVER

I

ON a hot July day last summer, three sad-looking fathers were seated on a mossy log, near a big oak-tree. One of them said drearily: "Gentlemen, I have a child—Arabella Maud. She is a good child, too, but I am sorry to say that she has one serious fault. She is *selfish*!"

"That is dreadful!" said the other two, sympathetically.

"I am glad to say," remarked the second papa, "that my little girl, Gwendoline Amelia, is not selfish, but, alas! she too, has a fault, for she is bad-tempered. She is what one would call a 'cross' child. It is a sad affliction, gentlemen, to have so

cross a child as Gwendoline Amelia," and the poor man wiped his eyes, and sighed awfully.

"I am in trouble, also," said the third man, at this point, "my motherless child, Rosamond Ophelia, is not selfish nor is she cross, but—she has another grave fault. She is—untruthful. *She tells lies!*" At these words, the poor man burst into tears, while the others put their arms about him, and tried in vain to comfort him.

"Would that we could do something," cried the three in chorus; "something to rid our poor children of these serious faults."

The words had scarcely been spoken, when from behind the near-by oak-tree, a man stepped forward, who placing his hand upon his heart, bowed low before them! The three fathers said nothing, but stared at him in utter amazement! Indeed it was not surprising that they did, for he was certainly not a common person. In spite of

the sultry day, he was warmly dressed in heavy bearskins, and not only that, but long glittering icicles hung from him everywhere! His pointed fur cap was completely covered with a thin coating of ice, while little heaps of snow rested comfortably on his broad shoulders. He was breathing hard, and for a moment was unable to speak. The three papas were silent, too; their breath quite taken away by this extraordinary apparition.

Then—"How do you do, shentlemens?" remarked the newcomer, with a slight German accent. "Excuse my costumes, for I am direct from Polenski Batsh, North Siberia. I remove my four coats now, for der climate here does not seem to need dem."

This he did, and underneath, was dressed as are most men, except that his shirt was of a vivid green color (which gave a charming spring-like touch to his

costume). Then he turned quickly to the fathers, and rubbing his cold hands together, said briskly, "To beezness! To beezness! You called me. I am here."

"But, sir," said one of the men timidly, "we do not understand. We did not call you."

"That is so," agreed the other two.

"Didn't you say, that you had some naughty childrens, and that you wished you knew of some gut safe way of improving them?" enquired the stranger.

"Yes, we certainly did say that," admitted the three, "but——"

"Vell then, I am the 'vay.' Dot is my special beezness—improving childrens. See!" and the stranger gave to the three astonished fathers a card, on which was printed in big clear letters:

A. Lügner,

Child-Improver,

Terms Reasonable. Safe Method.

“But,” objected the three gentlemen, “how do you—how *can* you ‘improve children?’ Do you take them away to do it? If so, we never would consent.”

“Nor is it necessary,” said Mr. Lügner, with a winning smile. “No, I improve der children right on the old home-ground, almost while they wait. How ’t is done, is mein secret, but it’s a neat and thorough way. I have to see der childrens. I give them one treatments. I ask that a father or mother be present. But now, my time is short; so bring der childrens at once—that is, if you wish to try my method.”

Interested by what the strange man had said, and greatly pleased with his general appearance, the three gentlemen, after consulting for a moment, decided to try the Lügner treatment, and hurrying away, soon returned with the children.

Mr. Lügner made the little girls stand in

a row, and looked steadily at them for a moment. Then:

“Arabella Maud, stand forth!” he said. Arabella, looking somewhat frightened, obeyed.

“I vash sorry to hear,” proceeded the man, “dot you are a selfish child. Now, I shall return in von week.” Here Mr. Lügner scowled, and then continued very slowly and impressively: “During dose seven days, Arabella, *whenever you are selfish, den—selfish*, and keep on sel-fish-ing until you again are *generous!*”

Arabella smiled at this, and said pertly, “I do not know what you mean—it sounds like nonsense.”

“You will soon understand,” said the Child-Improver, sternly, and Arabella, still smiling, stood back.

“Gwendoline Amelia,” called Mr. Lügner, “stand forth!” and the little girl did so.

"I am told dot you are very cross."

Gwendoline frowned, and said: "Some people think so."

"Then—whenever you are cross, be *cross* until you are *pleasant again!*"

"That is an easy thing to do," said Gwendoline Amelia, frowning still more, however, as she said it.

"What does the man mean by such nonsense?" cried her father indignantly. The Child-Improver paid no attention to this remark, but turned quickly to the third child.

"Rosamond Ophelia, come here!" he commanded. "I am told dot you are untruthful."

Rosamond opened her lips to deny this, but finding Mr. Lügner's piercing eyes fixed sternly upon her, she was afraid to do so, and remained silent.

"Answer. Do you tell lies?" he went on.

“Yes,” whispered Rosamond, and in shame hung her head.

“To you den,” said Mr. Lügner, “I say dis: whenever you lie,—*lie* and keep *lying*, until you *tell der truth*, once more.”

Rosamond, like the other children, was much amused.

“The man must be crazy,” whispered one of the fathers, “and we have wasted time talking to him.”

“Now, shentlemens and childrens,” proceeded the stranger, “kindly meet me here, von week from to-day. Fare you well. I go now to Kolenska, West Iceland, in one hour. There I shall need my every clothing.” So seizing his extra coats, Mr. Lügner put them on in a jiffy, and pulled his fur cap well down over his ears. Then he took his stout walking-stick, and threw it up into the air with all his strength. Jumping after it, he seized it firmly by its lower end, and

pulled himself up by it! From there, he again threw it up high into the air, jumping after it a second time, and pulling himself up by it as before. This act he repeated over and over again, rising of course, higher each time, until at last, he disappeared from sight! All this was done so quickly, that the gazing people below had scarcely realized what was taking place before their eyes.

"Well, friends," cried Arabella's father, excitedly, "a man who can do a thing like that, is no common man. I feel now, that after all, there may be some magic, in the silly sounding words he said to our children." The others agreed as to this, and went cheerfully home, feeling much encouraged.

Arabella Maud and her parents lived in a big stone house on a hill. She had a little brother and sister, a Shetland pony, a dog, and a cat. A girl who had so much

for which to be grateful ought never to have been selfish, ought she? After the afternoon's experience, she tried hard all the evening, and was very generous to everybody. This happy state of things continued until she went to school the next day. Then, when the drawing-hour came, and the nice sharp pencils were being given out in class, Arabella, entirely forgetting her good resolutions, seized, as usual, the best pencil on the tray. No sooner had she done so, than she seemed to hear the squeaky voice of Mr. Lügner saying right in her ear: "Arabella Maud, the next time you are selfish, *selfish!*" The words were spoken so distinctly, that she was startled, but something now happened which startled her still more, for the unfortunate little girl in spite of herself, and not without knowing why, rose slowly from her seat, and opening her mouth cried:

"*Fish! Fish to sell!* Nice fresh cod, mackerel, and haddock!!"

Now, did you ever hear of anything like that?

Arabella understood at last what Mr. Lügner had meant, by his odd-sounding words. When she was selfish, she was to *sell fish!* The teacher, however, did *not* understand, and was much vexed at what she thought was the little girl's rude conduct.

"Arabella!" she said sternly, "stop this nonsense, at once!"

She, poor child, although longing with all her heart to obey, was, of course, unable to do so. There she was forced to stand, the tears running down her cheeks, begging her school-mates to please buy her "nice fresh fish." At first, the children all laughed, thinking it was a great joke,—and then they became frightened. Finally the

teacher dismissed them, having made up her mind that poor Arabella must be ill.

At that moment, a happy thought came to the child, for she remembered that Mr. Lügner had told her she was to sell fish until she *became generous again*. "Then I'll be generous, at once," she said to herself; and hurrying to her desk, she took from it the good pencil, which had caused all the mischief in the beginning. Putting it back on the public tray, she chose a poorer one in its place. The result was magical, for no sooner had she done this generous thing than she stopped selling fish, immediately!

Her teacher, after hearing the wonderful story, kindly sent her home, and calling back the other children, explained matters.

As the next day was Saturday, there was no school, and in the afternoon Arabella Maud took her small brother Sam to the drug shop at the corner for some soda. In

pouring it, the man happened to fill one glass fuller than the other. Arabella saw this, and forgetting her sad experience of the day before, selfishly seized the fuller one! No sooner had she done so, however, than her mouth opened, and in spite of herself, she said to the clerk:

“Can’t I sell you some fish, sir? I have nice fresh halibut and cod.”

The man was of course surprised, but thinking that the little girl was joking smiled, and said: “Thank you, Miss, but I do not care for any fish to-day.”

“Please buy,” urged Arabella Maud, “I have some delicious butterfish.” (She didn’t even know what a butterfish was, but her bewitched lips would say the words.)

Sam, frightened at his sister’s strange conduct, burst into tears, while the man, evidently thinking that she was insane, put his hands on her shoulders, and said

earnestly: "I think you had better go home at once, little girl!"

Arabella, still crying her "Fish, fresh fish to sell!" turned to obey, although the tears streamed over her cheeks at the awful thought of selling fish in the crowded public street.

Just in time, she fortunately remembered what had saved her the day before. "I must do some generous thing," she said. So hastening to the counter, she seized her full glass of soda and forced it upon her weeping brother, taking the other emptier one herself. And, as before, the result was most satisfactory, for she immediately stopped selling fish, and could again control her mouth. She and little Sam hurried home, where Arabella threw herself into her mother's arms! The two had a long talk together, and you will be glad to hear, that from that time on, Arabella Maud was a

changed girl. She never sold any more fish, for she became as generous as generous could be. Her father and mother never looked sad again, but smiled gaily, from morning till night!

II

Meanwhile cross little Gwendoline Amelia walked slowly home with her father, finally reaching the white ivy-covered house, where they lived.

“Where have you two been?” called the mother cheerily, from the piazza. Papa told her the story of the afternoon’s doings, repeating what Mr. Lügner had said. Mamma was, of course, greatly interested, although she thought the stranger’s words sounded very foolish. “What could he have meant?” she asked.

They were not to be kept long in doubt as to this, however. Gwendoline went into

the house for her school-books, seated herself before a table at one end of the shady piazza, and began to study. For ten minutes or so she worked in silence, while her father and mother walked up and down the garden, arm in arm. Before long, Gwendoline needed to look up a word in the dictionary, and not finding the book at once, she began to search for it, scattering her papers right and left, before she finally found it.

“Oh, daughter, pick up your papers,—see, they are blowing all about,” called her mother.

At this gentle reproof, Gwendoline Amelia flew into a passion. “I don’t want to pick them up. I don’t see why you are so particular, Mother. Can’t you let me alone?” she said, crossly.

These words had scarcely died away, when Gwendoline felt an odd twitching and pull-

ing at her back. Then—to her amazement, her two long braids of hair suddenly flew up and crossed themselves, standing out stiffly, one at the right, one at the left, of her head! Then came a queer tugging at her waist, her beautifully tied sash untied itself with a quick nervous jerk, while the two ends proceeded to cross and stood out rigidly, one on either side! Next, her boots slowly unlaced themselves (a rare thing for boots to do). Gwendoline, fascinated, and too frightened to move, had been watching all these extraordinary happenings, which took place in a twinkling of an eye!

Suddenly, the child's temper rose; she became very angry at seeing herself thus publicly undressed in broad daylight!

“Stop unlacing,” she cried crossly to the shoe-strings, “stop this nonsense, at once!” but they paid no attention and continued to unlace, after which the two ends crossed!

“I command you to stop. I don’t like this business at all,” screamed the now frightened girl. But at this angry outburst, something still more extraordinary happened, for her poor little arms began to fold themselves, one over the other—then her two legs crossed! She used all the strength that was in her to prevent these dreadful things happening, but was absolutely powerless.

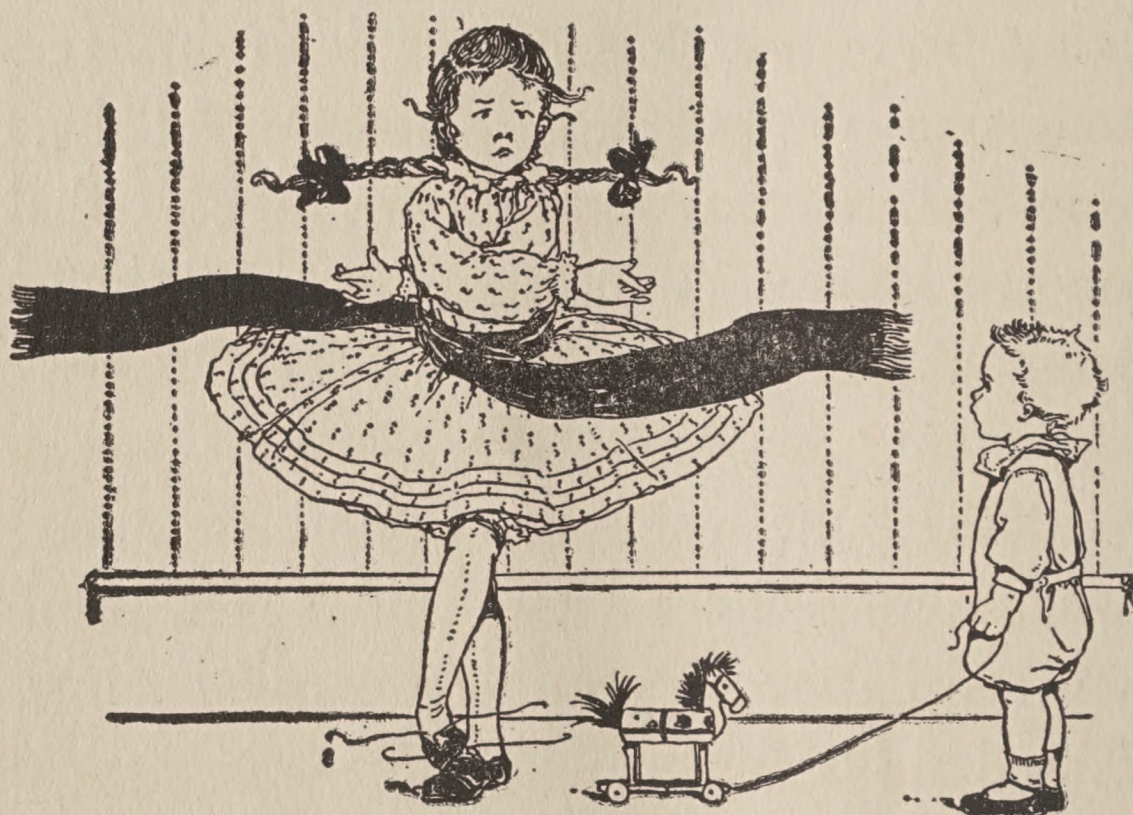
“*Papa! Mamma!*” she screamed.

Both came running at her call, and when they beheld their child, twisted and crossed in such a horrible way, their terror equalled her own.

“My darling!” cried her mother. “What has happened—why are you like this? Are you having a fit?”

As she gazed at her only child, to her unspeakable horror, Gwendoline’s eyes—her large beautiful eyes—began slowly to *cross themselves!* This was too much for the

poor mother, who fell fainting to the floor !
Gwendoline, helped by her distracted father,
hobbled to a chair, where she sat down and
buried her distorted face on her crossed arms.



“When you are cross, you must *cross*, till you
are pleasant.”

“What can have happened to me?” she
asked herself, despairingly. At that mo-
ment, a shrill voice whispered, in answer:

“I said that ‘when you were cross, you
must *cross*, till you were pleasant.’”

Gwendoline recognized at once, the voice of the Child-Improver.

“Oh, then all this is Mr. Lügner’s work,” she thought bitterly; “and I see now, exactly what he meant. He must be a powerful magician, for everything about me is certainly *cross*—as cross as cross can be! And he said that I should have to remain like this until I was pleasant. Then, if that’s the case, I am going to be pleasant just as fast as I can!” So she removed the unpleasant frown from her face immediately, and put in its place a pretty, winning smile. Then she began to sing gaily, although at heart, she felt anything but gay.

No sooner had she done these things, than to her intense delight and relief, her eyes became slowly straight, while her legs and arms hurried to uncross themselves!

With difficulty, she then stooped and smilingly picked up her scattered papers.

As soon as this was done, her two braids of hair uncrossed themselves, her pretty sash untwisted its ends, and running merrily round her waist, deftly tied itself behind, in fine fashion. Her boots became straight, too, while the lacings scampered to their different holes, and—to make a long story short—in a very few moments everything was in its place, and Gwendoline Amelia was as fully and neatly dressed as before!

It was certainly most gratifying, and a real smile now came to the girl's face, so that when her poor mother recovered from her fainting-fit, she saw before her, her own dear child.

Meanwhile papa had arrived, bringing with him the family doctor. There was now really nothing for the latter to do however, so he went home, first prescribing a tonic. But as this tonic was cod-liver oil,

the parents did not make their child take it, as they thought she had suffered enough already.

From that time on after her terrible experience, Gwendoline Amelia was a changed girl, and always as pleasant as one could wish. As for her parents, they never looked sad again, but smiled from morning till night!

III

After the talk with Mr. Lügner, the third little girl, Rosamond Ophelia, went home with her father. When they arrived, they called for Mary (the elder sister) and taking extra wraps, had a long ride in papa's new automobile. It was dinner-time when they returned, and after dinner, tired Rosamond went to bed. She did not study her geography at all, so when the lesson-hour came at school next day, she could not answer any questions.

“Rosamond Ophelia,” said Miss Treadwell, at last, “have you studied this lesson?”

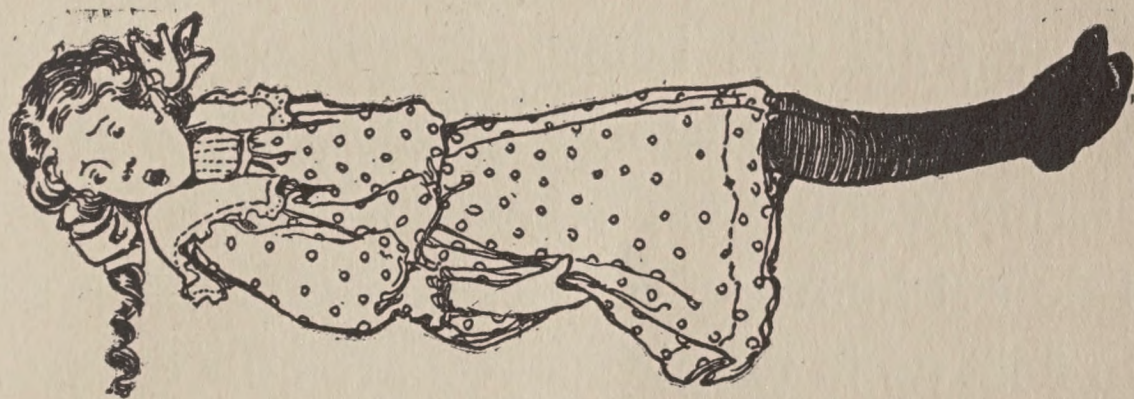
“Yes,” answered this naughty, untruthful child, “I studied it for over an hour last evening.” (She knew, of course, that in saying this, she had told a lie, and she felt far from comfortable.) Miss Treadwell, who was a very truthful Miss Treadwell, did not doubt Rosamond’s statement. She never even glanced at her again, until she heard a frightened cry from the other children; when looking up, she beheld, to her horror, Rosamond Ophelia, *floating in the air*, just above the desks! She could not believe her eyes at first, and gazed speechlessly at the child. There was certainly no doubt about it, for there lay the little girl, stretched at full length, with apparently nothing to support her!

“Rosamond Ophelia,” gasped Miss

Treadwell, when she was able to speak at all, "descend, and come here at once."

"I—I—can't," said the poor girl, beginning to cry.

"Why are you up there? What are you doing?" demanded the teacher sternly.



"When you tell a lie,—then *lie*, until you tell the truth."

"Just lying down," sobbed Rosamond.

As she said this, there came a shrill whisper in her ear. "When you tell a lie,—then *lie*, until you tell the truth."

Rosamond recognized Mr. Lügner's voice. "Oh, dear," she said, "I see now, exactly what he meant. I have told a *lie*, so

I must *lie* down, until I confess about the studying. I suppose I shall not be allowed to get down to the floor again, until I do! How awful!"

But for a moment she hesitated, ashamed to do this thing.

Meanwhile the teacher, believing that some trick was being played, was really vexed. "Rosamond Ophelia," she said sternly, "you are a very naughty little girl. I do not know, of course, how you manage to float up in the air, as you are now doing. But as you knew how to go up, you must also know how to come down again, and I insist upon you doing so, or—leaving the school at once."

At this, Rosamond burst into tears; but realizing that she could not remain floating there forever, she decided to tell the truth. So between sobs she made her confession. "I am suffering from a magic punishment,"

she whispered. "I—I—told *a lie* about the geography, Miss Treadwell, so I have to lie down like this. Indeed I can not help it." Then she went on and told the whole story from the beginning. No sooner had she done so, than she floated down and stood upright upon her feet once more!

She was bitterly ashamed, of course, of having been obliged to confess before the whole class that she had told a lie, and Miss Treadwell seeing how she felt, very kindly sent her home.

This sad experience was enough. Rosamond Ophelia never told another lie. From that day on, she became a changed girl and as truthful as an arithmetic. Her father was very, very happy, and smiled from morning until night!

One week from this time the three broadly smiling fathers and the three good little girls went to meet Mr. Lügner again.

This time, they found that he had arrived at the meeting-place before them.

"Straight from the Sunny South," he said gaily; and indeed, for such a climate he was very prettily and appropriately dressed, in a pale blue cheese-cloth costume with many dainty ruffles.

"Well," said he, looking about, "I tink I see some satisfactions in dose faces."

"You certainly do," said all the fathers, enthusiastically.

"Stand up, childrens," commanded the German.

They did so. "Now, Arabella Maud," he began, "has der selfishness gone out of you?"

"It has," she said.

"Gwendoline Amelia," he continued, "is der crossness all left you?"

"Entirely gone," admitted the child, smilingly.

“And you, Rosamond Ophelia, how is it mit you? Have you decided not to tell more lies?”

“I shall never tell a lie again,” she answered firmly.

“It is goot. My work here is now done,” and Mr. Lügner smiled and bowed low before them.

“But, sir,” cried the three fathers, “what do we owe? What shall we pay you for these remarkable cures?”

“I want no money, but if you are satisfied mit me, just write your names here,” and the Child-Improver produced a book, on the outside of which was stamped in large gilt letters, the words

“*SATISFIED PARENTS*”

“You see,” he continued, “when this book is quite full, I shall get a prize—a beautiful and also a lovely prize!”

“What is the prize to be?” cried the three children.

“A genuine terfillated *Gentipellion*, with a pithical-botular attachment,” cried Mr. Lügner enthusiastically.

Realizing how he must long to own so rare a thing as this, the three fathers hurried to add their names to the others, in the “Satisfied Parents” book.

No sooner had they done so than a perfectly enormous bat flew down from above, and alighted in front of them. Mr. Lügner did not seem surprised, but jumped lightly on the back of the creature, which then rose slowly with him.

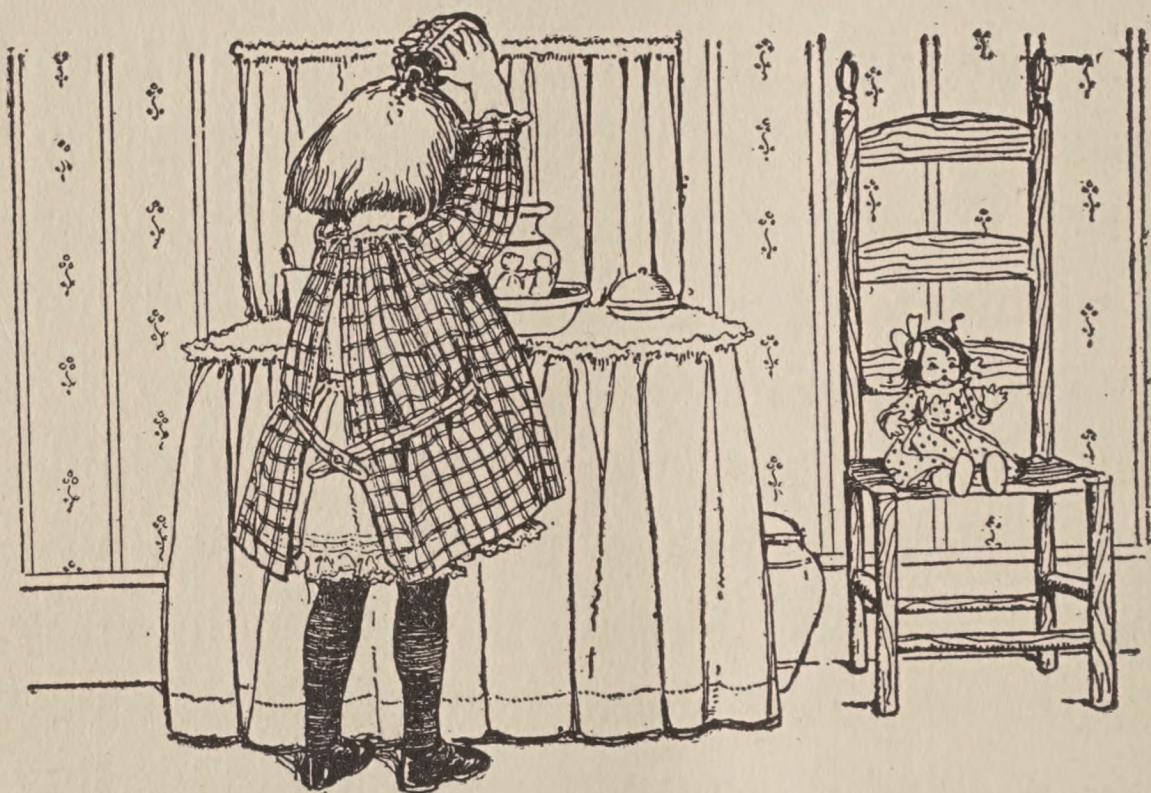
“Fare you well, peoples,” he shouted; “I go now to get for myself three ice-cream sodas—a peach, a strawberry, and also a pineapple! You see, I am so happy to have made *you* happy, that I wish to celebrate. In other words, I am (as you see),—*going off on a bat!!*”

LOUISE'S MISCHIEF-DAY

It was a warm day, and mamma had been washing little Louise's hair. It was partly dry when she was suddenly called away for a moment, leaving her little girl seated in a sunny window.

Now, Louise was generally a good child, but once in a great while she had a "mischief-day," and this happened to be the very one! So the moment her mother left the room, what do you suppose she did? She got up from the chair, ran to the wash-stand, and taking from it a bottle of hair-tonic, removed the cork, and without a moment's hesitation, poured the whole—*every single bit of it*, over her head! Did you ever hear of anything like that?

Now, unfortunately, as it happened, this particular hair-tonic was of a very uncommon kind, being amazingly and extraordinarily powerful. *One drop only*, to a



Poured the whole—*every single bit of it*, over her head.

whole big gallon of water was to be used ! It told you this, on each of its four fat sides, but as it was Louise's mischief-day, she paid no attention, but tipped the bottle up and up, using all, to the very last sticky drop ! Then

she hurried back to her chair, and seated herself. Almost at once, she began to be frightened at what she had done, for she noticed a most extraordinary feeling in her head,—an uncomfortable creepy sensation, followed by a queer tingling and pricking!

“Oh, dear!” she whispered, “I’m most ’fraid something is going to happen!”

In a moment, she felt a soft touch, first on her neck, then on her shoulder! Next came an odd rustling noise behind her, and turning anxiously, she saw—a strange and frightening sight! For there, upon the floor, if you can believe me, lay yards upon yards, upon more yards, of *hair*! You see, the hair tonic, which the little girl had used in its full awful strength, had n’t waited one bit, but had begun to tonic right away! And so fast had it tonic-ed that poor little Louise’s hair had begun with instant instantaneous—

ness, to grow—at about the rate of *two feet* a minute!

When the child looked behind her, there it lay on the floor, a great rippling golden mass, which was leaping and bounding eagerly, toward the open door! Jumping from her chair, the unfortunate girl rushed to the door, and screamed for her mother—a mother is badly needed at such a time! On the way, she became tangled in her own hair, but freed herself, just as her frightened parent reached her.

“My little girl! My darling!” cried mamma; “what has happened? and where did all this hair come from?”

“It came from me!” sobbed Louise; and controlling herself, she told the story of what she had done. Not stopping for talk, the mother seized the shears, and quickly cut the hair off. Then hurrying to the wash-stand, she rubbed and scrubbed and

scrubbed and rubbed her child's head, in a frantic endeavor to wash away the tonic. This treatment helped somewhat, by slowing things up a bit, the hair growing now, at the rate of only one foot each minute, which was, of course, quite a relief! But even this was bad enough, horrible in fact, and the poor mother, seeing that she could do no more, was almost frightened to death!

The doctor and then two barbers were hurriedly summoned, and papa, who was in New York, was telegraphed to. Louise was put into a vacant room on a comfortable chair, her hair thrown over its back; and the two strong barber-men barbered as hard as they could! The doctor was unable to do anything, and poor mamma stood there, helplessly wringing her hands, listening to the "click-e-ty click," and "snipper-ty snip" of the busy shears, and to the other strange noise, which the hair itself



The two strong barber-men barbered as hard
as they could.

made as it grew! Few people have heard this; it is a thick, surging oily sound impossible to describe. Well, these two strong barbers continued to barb, first one and then the other, all through that long dreary afternoon. The room kept getting full of the cut-off hair, although mamma and the three maids brought in empty baskets, which they would fill and remove, fill and remove. Food was served to them and to Louise on trays. The hours hurried on. Finally, at two minutes before six, one barber looked questioningly at the other, and the other looked back answeringly at the one, and they both nodded. As six o'clock struck, both men stopped short, not even taking down their scissors, but leaving them lying right up in the air, where they were! Then, folding their aprons, they put on their hats.

“But—but—what does this mean?”

Where are you going?" cried Louise and her mother.

"Home," said the two barbers; "we are Union Men, and are forbidden to work after six, P.M."

"Oh, but surely you will stay for a sad case like this!" pleaded mamma. "I will pay you extra." But the two men sternly refused, and moved toward the door!

"Then will you teach me how to cut, so that I won't get tired so quickly?" cried mamma, at last.

"Well," said one man, "if you will become a member of the Ladies' Barbers' Union, I will teach you, madam; but after all, that would do no good, for they would forbid you to work after six o'clock. We are sorry for you, but we must bid you good evening." And off the two went!

Meanwhile the hair kept growing like mad, and was now so long that both the

head and foot barber had actually to jump high over it, to get out of the room! The mother took the heavy shears and sat by her child, roughly cut—cut—cutting as well as she could, poor woman, until from fatigue she could cut no more!

Then the doctor, who had dropped in again for a moment, took a hand, too, and finally each of the maids, but at last, all became perfectly exhausted and had to rest. First, however, they put little Louise to bed, hoping that the hair, too, would take a rest; but they were mistaken, for, as it belonged to no union, it worked night and day! Mamma wisely directed its course out of the window, when it scampered nimbly down the house, until it reached the ground. There, the delighted neighbors cut it off and took it home, to make it up into fine mattresses and hair-pillows. But at last, everyone had more than enough even for

these pleasant purposes, and all went home, leaving the hair alone. And it went on growing! On and on and on, and—more on!

The midnight train brought papa, who had hurried home as soon as he heard of the things which were happening. After talking with mamma, he said:

“This cannot continue, my dear. *Something* has got to be done! Now, first, who makes the tonic? Let’s have a look at the bottle.” He examined it carefully. It was odd-looking, square, dark-brown in color, and covered with queer blue polka-dots. Its glass stopper was blue too, and very tall and pointed. On all four sides of the bottle, there were careful directions as to how to use the tonic, and many remarks as to its wonderfulness, and delightfulness.

“But who makes it?” shouted papa.

"That's the question. If I can find the man who makes the stuff, I feel sure he can help us."

But alas! there was no name on any of the four sides. Suddenly papa noticed a rough feeling underneath, and turning the bottle upside down, found what he was after. For there, in raised letters were these words: "Hair-Hastener, made by H. Higgs, 23 Humburg Street."

Papa hurried to the telephone and called up Mr. Higgs, who fortunately happened to be at home. He got up, dressed himself, and came to them at once, where he was told the story of their misfortune.

"You know what is in this tonic, sir, now will you help us?" begged the frightened parents. "Can you tell us what to do to make our child's hair stop growing?"

"To stop it?" repeated Higgs. "Well, well! It is a wonderful tonic, isn't it?"

and he pointed proudly at the mountain of hair lying on the floor.

"Indeed it is. Far too wonderful for most families," agreed papa.

"But, oh, Mr. Higgs, we beg you to hurry. Take pity on our little child! If you can stop her hair growing—know how to stop her, and will stop her, *won't* you stop her?"

"Stop her? Yes, I'll stop her—but, talking of 'stop her,' reminds me of something," continued Mr. Higgs calmly. "Have you people paid any attention to the stopper of this bottle? It is syncoplated you see, and has also the fashionable hyphren-etched neck ——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the now frantic mother; "but Mr. Higgs, you cannot expect us to be interested in stoppers, however beautiful, when our poor suffering child——"

"That's just it," said Higgs, "for I was

about to say, that this stopper is so made, that it will—*stop hair growing!*”

“*What?*” screamed the mother, “it will stop Louise’s hair growing? *Stop her?*”

“Stop her?” echoed the father.

“Stop her—yes. What’s a stopper for, anyway?” said Higgs.

But at this point, mamma, waiting to hear no more, seized the cork from the talkative Higgs, and rushed to Louise’s side!

First, with papa’s help, she cut off the heavy hair (whose ends were now far off, hurrying through one of the city’s quiet streets). This done, she took the glass cork, rubbed it thoroughly and vigorously all over her afflicted child’s head, and then she and papa awaited the result in deepest anxiety!

The effect of this treatment was simply magical. The thick, oily noise which the hair had made, while growing, ceased

immediately, while the hair itself remained short—not even a fuzzy suspicion of new growth was to be seen! Neither father nor mother was able to speak for a moment, so intense was their relief.

Then—“How *wonderful!* how *marvellous!*” they cried. Little Louise was now sitting upon the sofa, blinking sleepily at Mr. Higgs and feeling weak and unlike herself; for it had been pretty hard work for a small girl to grow so much hair, so very quickly, you know.

After receiving a handsome present and the heartfelt thanks of the entire family, Mr. Higgs bade them an affectionate farewell and went home.

But I am sorry to say, that in about seven weeks, the poor man became ill, with a severe attack of the Scarlet-Whooping-Measles. In a short time he died, and with him, alas! died the secret of how to

make the hair-tonic. Now, no matter how hard one may try, one cannot buy a single drop of "Higgs' Hair-Hastener," anyhow, when, nor even *where!*

THE WORSTED DOG

THERE was once a Blue Worsted Dog who lived in a Rug before a wide cheerful fireplace in a house not far from yours. This Rug had been made in Delft, a very far-away city in Holland, and as soon as it was finished, it had been brought across the wide waters to America. The Blue Dog was too young at the time to remember this, and as far back as he knew, he had lived right there in the middle of the warm Rug.

Over the fireplace where he lay there was a mantel, and on its ends stood two Delft China people—a little Boy and a little Girl. The Boy was a square, sturdy-looking fellow, with very wide trousers and bulgy jacket.

He was smiling down upon his broad blue shoes, which he seemed to think were very funny—anyway, he had been smiling at them for several years!

His little Sister, who lived at the other end of the shelf, was beautiful in her tall, be-frilled cap, and full blue and white dress. *She* was not looking down at her shoes, but held her lovely little head proudly erect, while she gazed with wide-open eyes at another part of the room.

Now, the Blue Worsted Dog admired the China Lady very much, and longed to have her speak to him. But, although he spent all his time telling her how lovely she was, she answered—never a word!

Every night, when the sun went off with itself down behind the hill, the House-Mistress would bring the big, perfectly white Cat, "Sapolio," and put him in his sleep-basket by the door. Sapolio was fat and

lazy, and would roll himself at once, into a neat ball—and go to sleep.

One day the Worstest Dog discovered that it was the Cat at whom the China Lady was looking so earnestly. He did not like this, so he begged her to look at him instead of at Sapolio. “Why, he’s nothing but a real Cat,” he said contemptuously. As the poet says:

“Though, white and clean and fat, I know,
He’s nothing but—Sapolio,
While I am Delft, and soft and blue,
And worsted, through and through and
through.”

“The Cat is awful selfish, too,” he added.
“He never even looks at you!”

At this, the Maiden sighed distressfully, but said—nothing.

Then the Worstest Dog turned to the China Boy, at the other end of the shelf.

“Tell me, Boy,” he asked, “why does the Lovely Lady refuse to be my friend?”

Now, the China Boy had never been spoken to before, since he had been baked, and he was so surprised, that he gave a big jump and almost fell over! Then he said in a dry cracked voice:

“My friend, I have noticed what you speak of myself, and I must say that my Sister is not polite. Sapolio is, as you say, nothing but a common *real* Cat, while we—we are from *Delft*!”

“Can’t you help me?” implored the Worsted Dog.

“Well,” remarked the Boy thoughtfully; “it is of course just possible that my Sister cannot see you—you lie so quietly at her feet. Now if you were to stand up, and trot round a bit, she would probably notice you at once.

The Worsted Dog was quite taken aback!

"Dear me!" he cried, "I do not think I could do that!"

"Oh, I see, you have but one side to yourself. Some are made that way, I know," said the China Boy, sympathetically. "In that case, you had better keep on lying flat, just as you are."

"No, no, you are quite mistaken. My sides are exactly alike," cried the Worsted Dog, indignantly; "I can scarcely tell which is which," and his shoe-button eyes snapped with excitement. "No, China Boy, the difficulty is not that—but this. I am attached to my home."

"Ah, so am I," said the Delft Boy, sentimentally.

"Don't make silly jokes," snapped the Dog. "I mean I can't get away from my home, for I am *sewed in*! However, if you really think that your dear Sister would like me better if I broke away from the Rug

and ran round the room once or twice, why *I will try to do it!*”

“Brave fellow! Do so!” said the Boy; and then, looking down again at his ridiculous blue boots, he put on his wide grin and said nothing more.

The Worsted Dog, having made up his mind, lost no time in carrying out his plan.

“The first thing for me to do is to free myself from the Rug,” said he. So he began to wrench and pull, to yank and tug with all his might, and then with all his main.

“O-o-h!” cried the poor Rug, “*Lie Down! Charge!*” But the Worsted Dog was like other dogs, for he wouldn’t obey.

“Dear me!” moaned the Rug, “what a restless centre-piece I have. I thought I had suffered enough when I came across that big humping ocean, but this is much worse. O-o-h! what is the Dog trying to do?”

He, meanwhile, had succeeded in freeing both his front paws. They were a great help, and with them he scratched and clawed hard, and in a very short time succeeded in pulling away his head, too. That is, he freed all but the very tip-est tip of his poor little nose. This was sewed in with a cruel firmness, and as the nose was particularly sensitive, the little Dog hesitated for a moment. Then, with splendid courage, he braced his two feet resolutely, gave a mighty wrench, and although he could not help giving a wee yelp of pain, he succeeded at last, and lifted his head proudly! To free his hind-quarters was now an easy matter, and in a very short time the last thread was broken, and the Dog was free. Out he jumped nimbly from his old home-hole. He tried to stand, but at first was unable to do so, as his wobbly worsted legs refused to do anything but wobble. This

quickly passed, however. He grew stronger and firmer every minute, and was soon able to stand with ease. Just then he heard some one coming, and crouched down quickly into his rug-hole, as he did not wish to be seen.

The Mistress entered the room, bearing in her arms the Cat, which she placed in the basket by the door. Sapolio wasted no time, but proceeded at once, to go round and round and round, as usual. Then he stopped, licked his front paw thoughtfully, and turned some more times in the other direction after which he cautiously lay down and shut his eyes.

The Mistress walked to the fire-place, poked the fire which burned up brightly, and put the fender before it ; so that if it became excited, it could not jump out into the room. Then she went away for the night. As the door "clicked" behind her, the Worsteds

Dog rose slowly to his feet and took a few uncertain steps. All went well, so he walked back and forth a few times in front of the fire. He was a pretty little fellow, having, like all his family, a rugged and well-knit figure.

"How do I look?" he asked the Rug.

"You look like a very disobedient pup," was the cross answer.

Not discouraged by this snub, the little Dog began to trot faster and still faster, till at last, he went at top speed round the room. He called gaily to the China Girl, "Dear Delft Damsel, look upon me! See what I have done to please you!"

But alas! to his great disappointment, the Little Lady did not look at him, even now, but kept her eyes steadily upon the Cat-basket by the door.

Then, the Worsted Dog decided that he would make a call upon the Cat, see what

sort of fellow he was, and why he was so charming. So he walked bravely up to the basket, and looked in, his worsted curls shaking with excitement.

The brightly burning fire made the room almost as light as day. At this moment, the Cat happened to turn over and found himself looking directly into the lovely shoe-button eyes of the Worsted Dog!

With a loud shocked "*Miau!*" he jumped up quickly, and gazed in dismay at his caller. When he saw the Dog's blue color, worsted curls, and glittering button-eyes, he was frightened almost out of his senses! He humped his back, spit some angry spits, and then crouched, threateningly.

At this, the Worsted Dog showed no fear. On the contrary, he came nearer, inch by inch.

The Cat, finding that the things he had done, had not frightened the enemy, made

up his mind that the only thing to do now was to run—and to run fast!

It was a great surprise to the Worsted Dog to see so brave a Cat run so swiftly, and he stood there, staring after him. The Delft Boy, who had been watching the two for the last ten minutes, called down excitedly, "Chase him! Now is your chance, Worsty, for he is afraid of you! Go for him!"

"I will," cried the Dog, his rich worsted voice trembling excitedly.

So round he quickly scampered after Sapolio. And he, finding that the Dog was in pursuit, ran for his life! Round he flew and round-er flew the Dog, after him! In the past Puss had met many a fierce dog, but never had he had an enemy like this.

What frightened him most, was the silence of the beast. His footsteps were noiseless, and never a bark nor growl nor snarl

came from the tight-shut red worsted lips!

“He is only knitted—he must soon get tired,” thought the poor Cat to himself, and he ran faster yet, but alas, faster yet ran the Dog!

Sapolio did n’t even notice where he was going now, and soon knocked over a vase, which fell with a *crash!* Then, hurrying on, he next ran into the tongs and bang! down they clattered! A poor innocent rubber plant was the next thing to suffer, and over it went without a protest, lying at full length on the floor.

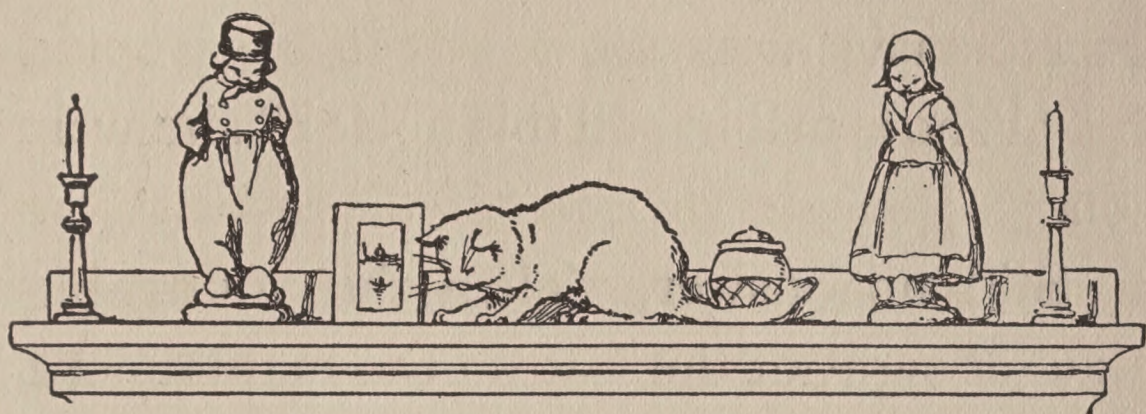
Alarmed at all this, the Cat now leaped to the top of a table, hoping for safety there, but—without a moment’s pause, after him stole the stealthy Dog!

“*Good!*” “Did n’t think you could get up there!” cried the China Boy at this point. The Worstest Dog was surprised himself, for it was quite an art to jump on to a table.

After having done so, he felt that he should be able to follow wherever the Cat might lead. Looking over at the Delft Lady, he found to his delight, that she was watching the chase with interest. Down from the table hurried Sapolio, hitting, alas! as he jumped, the pretty lamp, which fell to the floor with a loud crash! breaking in many pieces, and spilling the oil all over the floor.

The Cat was now beginning to lose his breath. He was a dignified, well-fed animal and it had been a long time since he had ran so fast as this! He realized that he could not keep up the swift pace much longer. So he looked about and then, with a despairing gasp, he gave a mighty jump, way up on to the mantelpiece itself, knocking over a beautiful tall vase, as he did so!

The Worsted Dog was frantic at seeing Sapolio up on the mantel, and so near the Lovely Lady, and gathering himself to-



gether, was about to follow, when he suddenly heard footsteps—someone was coming!

Knowing that it would never do for him to be caught, he scurried with all speed to his Rug, and lay down flatly in his empty hole.

The door was now opened, and the Mistress, dressed in a long wrapper, entered the room, turning on the electric light, as she did so.

“Is anybody here?” she asked.



No answer.

“Who is making all this noise?” she went on.

Still no answer. Then the young girl caught sight of the Cat on the mantelpiece.

“Ah ha!” said she, “I understand. It was *you*, Sapolio?” Then, looking about the disordered room, she went on sternly. “You naughty kitty. I shall punish you for this.”

But the Cat, poor fellow, did not wish to be punished for something for which he was really not to blame. To have first, a queer unnatural Worsted Dog, chase you round the room, and then your own dear Mistress was a little too much, he thought. So as she came near, Sapolio ran along the shelf to get away, and gave a desperate leap, right over the China Lady, and down on to the floor! But alas! He did n’t leap the leap quite high enough, and his left hind foot

struck the stylish high-frilled cap of the dear Little Lady, who tot-tot-tottered after him, down on to the floor below! But she wasn't in the least killed—for where do you think she fell? Directly on to the middle of the Rug where lay the Worsted Dog! He with his thick fluffy curls, kept the Little Lady from all harm. The Dog was too happy for words,—he simply could n't speak!

Meanwhile the Cat was to be pitied, poor fellow, for he was being chased within an inch of his life, by his active young Mistress. Round ran the two, scarce stopping for breath. At last, Sapolio was cornered and caught.

He at once miau-ed, a very full and true account of the whole affair, but alas! young Mistresses never understand even the simplest cat-talk. She listened, and proceeded to scold him severely, for having broken all her pretty things. Then she picked up

the rubber-plant and the China Lady, whom she was very glad to find unhurt. Next she noticed the queer, rumped-up look of the Worsted Dog, and upon examination, found that he was *loose*! She lifted him up.

“So you even scratched this poor, innocent little Dog out of his hole, with your sharp naughty claws, did you?” At this, Sapolio turned sad reproachful eyes upon the young girl, for it was pretty hard to be accused of having scratched up that hateful little Dog, who had been the cause of all the mischief!

“Now, Sapolio,” proceeded the young Mistress, “I am going to take you away. Never again shall you sleep in this room.”

This was a most pleasant punishment. The Cat was delighted, and so was the Worsted Dog. The little Delft Lady—did n’t care!

The next day, the room was put in order, and the lamp and vases mended. Then young Mistress bought some strong linen thread—thread as strong as a prize-fighter, and she sewed the Dog firmly into the Rug. With such unusual firmness did she sew him, in fact, that by no possible effort could he ever get away again!

But now that he had the friendship of the China Lady, he was perfectly happy just to lie quietly there and look up at her, and have her look back at him.

THE STORY OF THE CEILING- PEOPLE AND OTHERS

(As told by their friend Philip—aged five)

CHAPTER ONE

THEY live up on the Ceiling, and they 're all my friends, Mamma. Their names are Elna, and there's Elna's-Papa, an' Elna's-Papa's-Mary, too. They've got every furniture—except beds. They don't need beds, 'cos they only sleep one hour in the night-time, an' they alwuz sleep standing up. They are cooking every minute, for they eat an' eat. They eat so to keep themselves happy, an' they smile all the time.

They's two Osmet-birds that fly under the Ceiling-world. They are big, dim gray birds, an' alwuz fly away from yer! They

never stop, 'cos their stopping-part got broke when they was little. They catch worms an' bugs, an' give 'em away; an' they eat puffed rice, themselves. It 's very gray an' very misty, up in the Ceiling-country. It rains a lot there. It begins to rain at three in the morning, an' it r-a-i-n-s till a few minutes to four, an' then it stops (for a little while). An' at four, it begins again, an' it r-a-i-n-s till almost five, an' then it stops (for a little while). An' at five, it begins to r-a-i-n again, an' it rains-an'-stops, rains-an'-stops, rains-an'-stops, all the day an' all the night—forever!

There 's four dogs up there, an' their names is Hedjinal, Gyoing-Gyon, Sangan, an' Perswire; an' there 's four cats called the Greeds, an' two Under-cats—Snifer an' Neffort. They 've got one dear little canary too, called Vitzt, an' he 's got *teeth*!

Everybody is *so* exprised he 's got teeth!

I bought him myself and I choosed a teething one, so 's he could eat cwisps toast. He sings a lot, for—he has n't any time to stop. He 's the only canary up there to sing for all those many Ceiling-people, yer know. Hedjinal, Gyoing-Gyon, an' the Greeds, slide down every day into Our-World on a big board, with a hinge at the top. The dogs go every day to Siarner. Siarner's a place, yer know, just a place (for dogs to go to).

The Greeds are alwuz very frightened animals. You must be careful to speak very soft an' tender to 'em, for when you speak loudly, they *melt*! Melt 'way back d-e-e-p into the grayness again, an' yer don't see 'em till the next day—ever!

CHAPTER TWO

I had a birthday to-day, an' they gave me two dolls—"Gizard" an' "Hare-O." I named 'em both. I had a brown bear too

—“Percheel Harmona.” But his name is so long, I call him “Percheel” alwuz, an’ he loves me.

I can feel Percheel an’ Gizard with my hands, an’ everybody can see ’em too. But, everybody can’t see my Ceiling-people, ’cept me, ’cos they don’t know the really right way to look at ’em. You alwuz have to look at ’em the *puffic’ly* right way, or you can’t see ’em at all, yer know!

CHAPTER THREE

When I went to Grandma’s to-day, I found a new clock. She didn’t know it was there, so I had to tell her ’bout it, an’ she was exprised when I told her it was standing right in the corner of her library on the floor. Grandy said she really didn’t want a clock there, ’cos she wanted ’em to sweep the floor sometimes, but I told her that this clock, was the kind that would *hump*

itself up, an' let yer sweep under it, an' when you'd finished, would unhump itself again; an' go on ticking, all the time! Yer see, Grandy didn't know what kind of a clock it was, till I told her, but she said that if I was sure it was a real "humper," she didn't have any ob-jec-tions to it, an' that it might re-main there.

When clocks pen-du-lums is cold, they alwuz tick v-e-r-y slowly. I put one of Elna's cold Ceiling-clocks on the register to-day, to hotten it up, an' Mamma came in, an' she went there an' didn't see it, an' stepped right on it, an' smashed it *awf'ly*—(an' I cried!)

CHAPTER FOUR

There are only but two Hong-gars in the world. They live in woods, an' have to stay there alwuz. They are trying to get at people, but course people all know

'em, an' go around where they live. One lives in the woods in New York, the Other One—*does n't!*

No one goes into the New York woods—ever! The Hong-gars are just as big round as a house, an' a little more higher, than the very highest building. Their bodies are green, an' their heads are white, an' they're *callorsic* an' *prenoxious!* Each of 'em has twelve little babies!

Ambwid is 'nother place you alwuz have to go round of, very careful. Outside it, there 's a wall of awful big chicken-rocks, an' when they see you coming, they say: "There 's a little boy. Let's trip him up!" So they reach way down deep inside of themselves, an' then when you step on 'em, you fall right down! The Ambwid people are Catchers too. They glue yer to the ground, if they catch yer, an' they rub on something that statues you, *rightaway-*

quick! An' no one can ever get unstatued again!

CHAPTER FIVE

I found a little baby on Mamma's sofa-pillow to-day, an' it was dreadf'ly cunning. It had two very shining eyes, an' its name was Columba Edgewell. It came from Branx—which is a very far-away place. Mamma said it was only a make-believe baby, but I was sure it was real, 'cos I could see it myself, yer know. I kicked the pillow high, an' Mamma said that if a real baby had been there that he would n't like to be kicked like that, but I told her that Columba Edgewell was n't a usual kind of a baby at all, an' that he just *loved* to be kicked, an' the more I kicked him,—the happier he growed!

Columba sleeps on his pillow up on the Ceiling, every night, an' Elna's-Papa feeds him every seven minutes!

CHAPTER SIX

What you s'pose happened to Elna's-Papa's-Mary to-day? She was walking on the street, when a little child came running very fast to her, an'—*cut her legs off!* Both of 'em! An' it was n't a naxident, for she *meant* to cut 'em off! She was n't a nice child at all, yer know. She was very naughty indeed, an' fin'ly she grew so awful bad, that the world just could n't stand her any more. So they took her, an' they burned her to a cwhisp cinder; Yer see—the world could stand the cinder, when they *could n't stand the child!!*

LAST CHAPTER

Sometimes, when I go in my room an' shut the door, my Ceiling-people talk to me, an' I listen, an' never interroop. They've got very thin soft voices, just b-a-r-e-l-y loud enough for me to hear. They tell me long stories, an' they talk an' talk——

An' every night, after I say my prayers, an' the Fam'ly go out of my nursery-room, I wait a minute till everything is puffic'ly quiet, an' then I call up:

“Good-night, Ceiling-people!”

An' then—there's a funny little rustling up there, an' I hear a sort of *bending-down* noise, an' then far-away voices call down to me:

“*Good-night, Phil-ip! Good-night!*”

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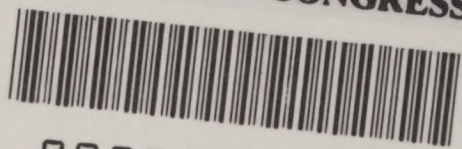
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